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914
BARBER, J.T.
A tour throughout South Wales and Monmouthshire

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Tintern Abbey.

A

TOUR

THROUGHOUT

SOUTH WALES

AND

MONMOUTHSHIRE.

COMPREHENDING

A GENERAL SURVEY

OF THE

PICTURESQUE SCENERY, REMAINS OF ANTIQUITY, HISTORICAL EVENTS, PECULIAR MANNERS, AND COMMERCIAL SITUATIONS, OF THAT INTERESTING PORTION OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

BY J. T. BARBER, F.S.A.

ILLUSTRATED WITH A MAP AND TWENTY VIEWS, ENGRAVED FROM DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY J. NICHOLS AND SON, RED LION PASSAGE, FLEET STREET;

FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, STRAND.

1803.

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To RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN, Esq. M. P.

SIR,

HIGHLY admiring that transcendant genius and ability which renders you conspicuous among the foremost characters of the age; nor less venerating that manly independence which has dignified your political career, even under circumstances the most trying; it must be my regret, in dedicating this Work to you, that it is not more suitable to the rank of merit to which it is inscribed.

I am, SIR,

With great respect,

Your most obedient Servant,

J. T. BARBER.

Southampton-street, Strand,
London, Feb. 15, 1803.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE intention of this Work is, to point out and describe such objects as command general interest throughout the country.—The usual plan of Tours only comprising a particular route, unless that precise line be retraced, a Tourist is obliged to encumber himself with several books, to enable him to gain all the information that he requires. The Author has felt this inconvenience in several excursions through Great Britain; and has therefore selected from the best authorities an account of those few parts which he had not an opportunity of visiting; in order that this Work may exhibit a general survey of Southern Cambria.

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of
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Blanporth
Llangwedmor
Llechryd
Cardig
Lampeter
Newcastle
Kilgarran
Newport
Fishguard
Pembrokeshire
Precelly
Mountain
Llansamel
St. Davids
Roch Cas.
St. Leonard's
Rathe
Caermarthens
Llandilo vawr
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St. Clare
Towey
Newton Park
St. BRIDES
BAY
Haverford
West
Lawhaden
Narberth
Picton Cas.
Johnston
Hubberston
Milford
Lawrenny
Newton
Laugharne
Llanstephan
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Llanelly
Pont ar
Lidulas
Caren
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Lampney Court
Tenby
CAERMARTHEN
BAY
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Lanmorbear
Buckpool Court
Webley Cas.
Swansea
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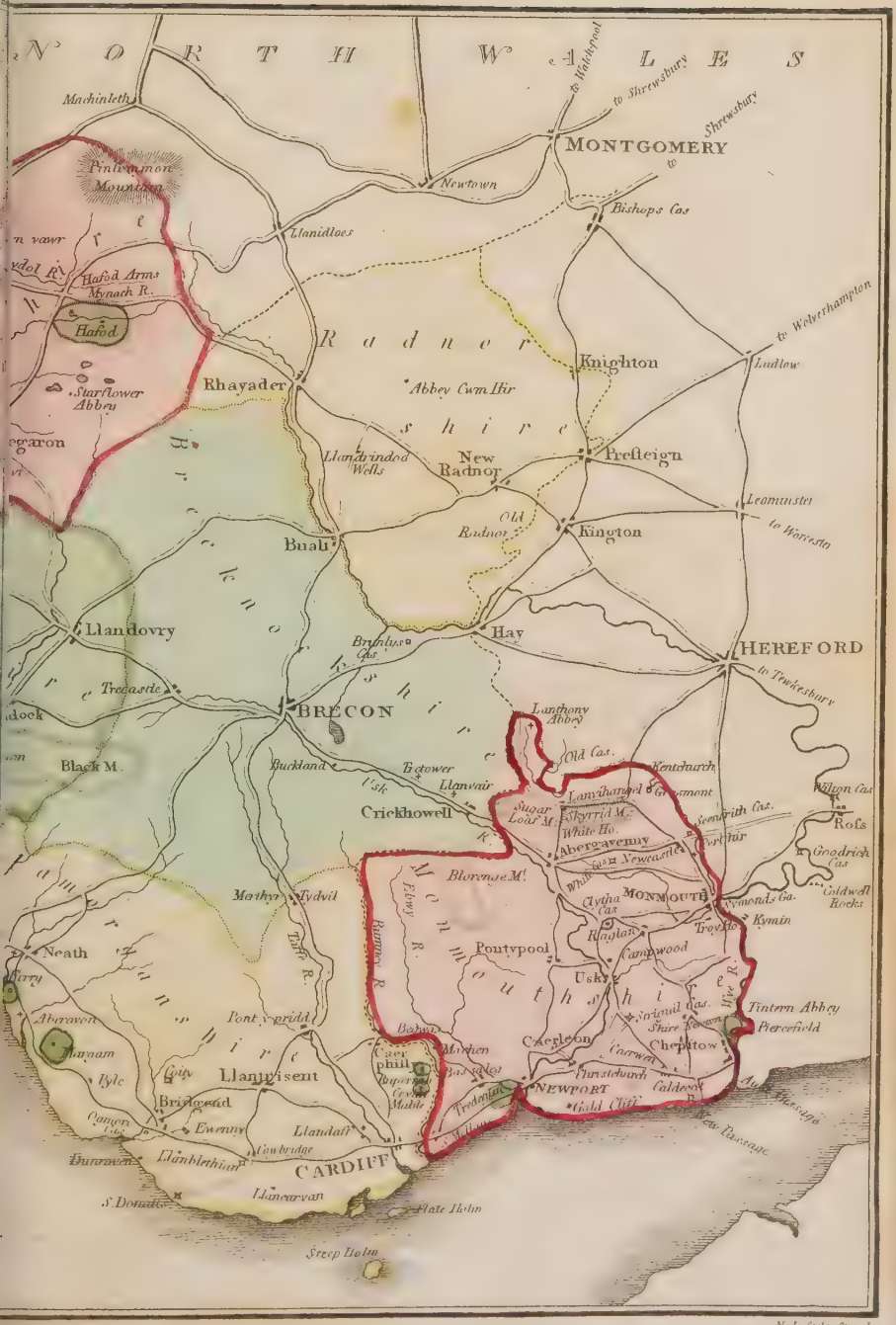

Neele sculp. Strand.

A TOUR

OF

SOUTH WALES AND MONMOUTHSHIRE.

INTRODUCTION.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS—A SKETCH OF WELCH HISTORY—ANCIENT BUILDINGS.

SECT. I.

IN making the Tour of South Wales and Monmouthshire, the *Admirer* of *picturesque beauty* dwells with peculiar pleasure on a tract of country comprising the greater part of Monmouthshire, and bordering the Severn and Bristol channel, to the western limits of Pembrokeshire. In this enchanting district, a succession of bold hills, clothed with wild forests, or ornamental plantations and delightful valleys, present themselves in constant va-

riety: many fine estuaries and rivers, picturesque towns, and princely ruins, also adorn the scene, whose charms are inconceivably heightened by the contiguity of the Bristol channel, which washes the coast; in some places receding into capacious bays; in others, advancing into rocky promontories of the most imposing grandeur.

The Statistical Enquirer finds equal subject of gratification, in the uncommon fertility of several valleys, and the woody treasures of numerous hills, bearing myriads of oaks, and other first-rate timber-trees. The mineral wealth of the country, and its convenient coast for traffic, are likewise subjects of high consideration; and, while the statist applauds the late rapid strides of manufactures and commerce in this district, he may discover sources hitherto latent for their increase.

The Historian cannot fail of being interested, while treading on the ground where Britons made their latest and most vigorous efforts for independence, against successive invaders; nor *the Antiquary*, while traversing a country replete with Monuments of the Druidical ages; military works of the Romans, Britons, Saxons,

Saxons, and Normans; and the venerable relics of numerous religious foundations.

Beyond this stripe of country, from ten to twenty miles in width, forming the southern extremity of Wales, and an intermixture of rich scenery (particularly in the neighbourhood of Brecon), with prevailing dreariness on the eastern frontier, South-Wales exhibits a tedious extent of hills without majesty, valleys over-run with peat bogs, and unprofitable moors. Beside the superb ruins of St. David's, the course of the Tivy near Cardigan, and the scenery about the Devil's Bridge, it has little to entice the attention of the tourist: the towns, for the most part, are miserably poor, and travelling accommodations very uncertain; the roads, too, are wretched beyond any thing that a mere English traveller ever witnessed. It is, therefore, a subject of no small gratification, that the chief beauties of South-Wales are found in a compact route; abounding with good towns, respectable accommodations, and very fair roads. This part of the country may be explored in a close carriage, though the better mode of travelling is, certainly, on horseback. The pedestrian may claim peculiar

advantages in his way of getting on; but I do not conceive, that a man enduring the fatigue of trudging day after day through miry roads, can maintain an exhilaration of spirits congenial with the beauties that surround him.

SECT. II.

THE geographical situation and present limits of Wales are unnecessary to be here described. Of its history, the first certain accounts that we collect are on the invasion of the Romans, when Wales appears to have been divided into three principalities: the Silures, the Ordovices, and the Dimitæ. The Silures possessed all that tract of country bounded by the Severn, the Tame, and the Towey; which, comprehending the counties of Monmouth, Glamorgan, Brecknock, Radnor, Hereford, and part of Gloucester, Worcester, and Caermarthen shires, comprised the greater part of South-Wales. The Dimitæ inhabited that part of South-Wales westward of the Towey; and the Ordovices, North-Wales, including Anglesea.

The Romans having subdued *Britannia Prima, i. e.* the Southern part of England, advanced

advanced to the conquest of Wales, by them denominated *Britannia Secunda;* in this, however, they met with an unlooked-for opposition; the inhabitants were vigorous and brave; and the country, wildly piled together with mountains, forests, and morasses, presented an aggregation of difficulties, that would have discouraged a people less ardent in their enterprizes: nor did they succeed, until after a long warfare and a severe loss. The Silures and Dimitæ fell under the yoke in the reign of Vespasian, when they were vanquished by *Julius Frontinus.* The Ordovices were not finally subdued until the time of his successor, *Agricola*, who, according to Tacitus, exterminated the whole nation.

The Romans retained possession of this country until A. D. 408, when they withdrew their legions, and the most warlike of the British youth, for the defence of their central dominions. The inroads of the Scots and Picts, which immediately followed, do not appear to have materially affected the Welch; nor did the Saxons, though at constant war with them for several centuries, acquire any settled dominion in the country: yet they more than once partially overran

Wales, obliging it to pay tribute; and in the reign of Edward the confessor, Harold, at the head of a great army, entering Wales, defeated Prince Griffith, sovereign of North-Wales, and, establishing himself in Gwent* (Monmouthshire), began a Palace at Portswit, which was, however, destroyed by Griffith before its completion.

From the departure of the Romans in 408, to the inroads of the Anglo-Norman chieftains in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Wales was divided into numerous petty sovereignties or lordships, of varying name and extent, but tributary to an imperial Prince; though sometimes that dignity was split into two or three branches. These chiefs were usually at war with each other, or with their Princes, who seldom obtained tribute when their means of enforcing it was questionable.

The Anglo-Norman dominion in Wales was brought about in a manner wholly different from former conquests. William the First and his successors, finding sufficient employment in securing their English possessions, invited their chiefs, holding lands in the

* The Saxons at this period are supposed to have occupied Monmouth, Chepstow, Caerwent, and Caerleon.

neighbourhood

neighbourhood of Wales, to make incursions against the Welch lords, upon their separate interests. The Norman leaders thereupon, by creating feuds among the native powers, siding with one or the other party, and breaking with them on convenient opportunities, contrived to fix themselves in various parts of Wales; whence their conquests extending, by degrees, overspread the greater part of the country. The lands thus obtained became the property of the conquerors, who, under the title of lords marchers, were allowed to exercise an uncontrolled jurisdiction within their demesnes: but power acquired on such principles could only be retained by force; every petty despot secured himself in a fortress, and hence arose the extraordinary number of castles with which Wales is crowded, amounting, according to a native author *, to 143. The Welch princes still held a considerable tract of country, frequently overthrew the intruders, and even carried their arms into England; but in the defeat of the brave Llewelyn, by Edward the First, Wales lost every remnant of its indepen-

* Mr. Pennant.

dence, and became definitively united to the crown of England.

In the reign of Henry the Eighth Wales was divided into twelve shires, and Monmouthshire was included among the English counties; the feudal despotism of the lords-marchers was then abolished; and Wales, participating in the equal shelter of English jurisprudence, has proved itself as zealous in defending the common interests of the empire, as it was formerly conspicuous in struggling for its particular freedom.

SECT. III.

Among the numerous memorials of history and antiquity which distinguish Wales, castles and religious buildings possess the chief claim to attention; and, as Wales is an admirable field for the study of the civil and military architecture that prevailed in the middle ages, I shall give a slight sketch of the progress of those arts, so far as it seems applicable to the present purpose.

On the overthrow of the Romans by the Goths and Vandals, the arts vanished before the scourge of war; and the standard mode of architecture which adorned the Greek and Roman

Roman empire could no longer be executed in its original perfection. The general forms, indeed, were imitated, but without an observance of symmetry: the execution was rough and clumsy; the pillars were excessively thick, and the arches heavy; and where ornament was attempted the performance was very uncouth. Such was the state of architecture (a mere corruption of the Roman) that succeeded the devastations of the Goths, and has been called *Saxon* and *Norman*: the term Gothic, however, would certainly be more appropriate.

At the beginning of the twelfth century, a new style of architecture made its appearance, distinguished by pointed arches and clustered columns *. Though at first coldly received,

* The common appellation of this mode, *Gothic*, is equally improper with the preceding, as the reign of the Goths was at an end long before its introduction: indeed its origin is wrapped in obscurity. Sir Christopher Wren, and after him many architects and antiquaries, have attributed it to the Saracens, and hence called it Saracenic; but their grounds are very questionable. Perhaps the homely conjecture, that it arose from the pointed form in the intersecting Saxon arches, may be as near the truth as one derived from more laborious researches; indeed, from the specimens of early Gothic which I have seen, I am of opinion, that cogent reasons may be

received, and but sparingly introduced among the rounded arches and massive columns called Saxon, it soon gained an undisputed footing.

About the latter end of the reign of Henry the Third, we find it acquire a more ornamental and distinct character. The pillars, which before were round, and encircled with slender detached shafts, were then formed in entire reeded columns; the arched roofs also, which only exhibited the main springers, then became intersected with numerous ramifications and transomes. The decorations continued to increase until toward the close of Henry the Eighth's reign, when the light of science again dawned over Europe, and the relics of Greece and Rome were rightly considered as models of genuine taste; the classic elegance of the five Orders then appeared, intermixed with the Gothic; it soon became universal, and is now adopted in all superior buildings throughout Europe. Further characteristics of style might be pointed

be adduced, to prove it rather to be of natural growth from the Saxon modes, and formed in its characteristics by gradual alteration, than a new system of remote and detached origin.

out,

out, and lesser variations defined: but I do not presume to inform the antiquary; and the distinctions already drawn will be sufficient for the cursory tourist.

Castles appear of no generally chosen figure, except such as were founded by the Romans, who preferred that of an oblong square, unless there were special reasons to the contrary. Small castles consisted of a single court, or ward, whose sides were usually flanked by towers. The great hall, chapel, and domestic apartments, built from the outer wall into the court, occupied one or more sides. The citadel, called also the Keep and Dungeon, was a tower of eminent strength, wherein the Garrison made their last stand, and where prisoners were sometimes confined: the citadel was often detached from the walls, and built on an artificial mound encircled with a ditch. The barracks for the soldiers in garrison was generally a range of building near the gatehouse, or principal entrance. The latter building contained apartments for the Officers of the castle, and the portal was furnished with one, two, or three portcullisses*.

* An iron grate, with spikes at the bottom, which was let down after the gate was forced.

A wet

A wet or dry moat surrounded the whole; and, advanced before the drawbridge that crossed it, there was often an outwork called a barbican. Large castles were only a repetition of these courts upon somewhat of a larger scale, connected with each other (Chepstow castle consists of four). In fortresses of the first class, an extensive embattled wall sometimes encircled the mass of fortification already described, at some distance, inclosing a considerable tract of ground, as at Caerphilly in Glamorganshire*. Castle walls appear in some instances built of solid masonry; but their general construction is of grout work. For this purpose, two slight walls were built parallel, from six to twelve feet asunder; the interval was then filled up with loose stones and rubbish, and the

* Several years ago, when I first set about castle-hunting, I endeavoured in vain to discover a relation between what I saw, and the description with a figure of an ancient castle, laid down in Grose's Antiquities, and copied by others. I have since seen the greater part of the principal ruins in South-Britain; and the only castles that occur to me as approaching to that gentleman's plan, are those of Dover and London. I mention this, because persons building a theory on the authorities above-mentioned, might, among ruins, be puzzled, to no purpose, for a practical illustration.

whole cemented together with a great quantity of fluid (according to some authors boiling) mortar: the mass soon acquired a sufficient firmness, and in the present day it possesses the adhesion of solid rock. This method was used by the Romans, and adopted by succeeding ages; but the arches were turned, and the angles coigned with hewn stones, which, after the Conquest, were brought from Caen in Normandy.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

VOYAGE FROM BRISTOL TO SWANSEA—SWANSEA CASTLE—MANUFACTORIES—WELCH BATHING—OSTERMOUTH, PENRICE, AND PENNARTH CASTLES—SEAT OF MR. TALBOT—ARTHUR'S STONE, A LARGE CROMLECH.

IN company with a brother artist, I entered BRISTOL with an intention of commencing my Cambrian tour in the neighbourhood of Chepstow; but an unthought-of attraction induced us to relinquish this project.

Returning from a ramble through the town, by the quay, we were agreeably amused with a fleet of vessels that was about to quit the river with the ebbing tide; some of them were already in full sail floating down the stream, and others getting under weigh. The spirited exertions of the seamen, and the anxious movements of numerous spectators,

devoting

devoting their attention to friends or freight, gave animation to the scene, which was rendered particularly cheerful by the delightful state of the morning. On a sudden we were saluted with a duet of French-horns from a small sloop in the river; a very indifferent performance to be sure, yet it was pleasing. This sloop was bound to SWANSEA; and we learned that the wind was so directly favourable, that the voyage would in all probability be completed the same afternoon. We were now strongly disposed for an aquatic excursion; nor did the laughing broad faces of about a dozen Welch girls, passengers, alarm us from our purpose: so by an exertion we collected our portmanteaus and some refreshments in due time, and engaged in the voyage.

Leaving Bristol, and its romantic but ruined suburb CLIFTON, we entered upon the remarkable scenery of St. VINCENT'S Rocks. A bolder pass than is here formed I scarcely remember to have seen, even in the most mountainous parts of Great Britain: on one side, a huge rock rises in naked majesty perpendicularly from the river, to the height of some hundred feet; the immense surface is tinted

tinted with the various hues of grey, red, and yellow, and diversified by a few patches of shrubs, moss, and creeping lichens. A range of rocks equal in magnitude, but of less precipitous ascent, clothed with dark wild forest trees and underwood, forms the opposite boundary of the river; attempering the menacing aspect of impendent cliffs, with the softer features of sylvan hills.

The grandeur of the river's banks diminishes until near the Avon's junction with the Severn; when the commanding height of Kingsweston-hill, adorned with the groves, lawns, and plantations of Lord Clifford's park, rises conspicuously eminent, and engages a parting interest. We soon entered the Severn, here an expansive estuary, and so far a noble object; but deriving little importance from its shores, which, except in the neighbourhood of Aust, are a mere undulation of corn-fields and pastures. The display of cultivation, though gratifying, is certainly inferior in picturesque merit to the grand features of cliffs and mountains which distinguish the shores of PEMBROKESHIRE, and the western coast of Wales.

For

For some time we were well entertained with our voyage; when satisfied with external objects, we found amusement in the cooped-up circle of our companions, and entered upon a general meal, without the assistance of knives or plates, with much good humour: nor was there a lack of wit, if we might judge from the continued bursts of laughter that sallied on the occasion. But the scene presently changed: the wind, at first so favourable, shifted to the opposite point, increasing from a pleasant breeze to a fresh gale; the sun no longer played on the surface of the water; the sky became overcast; and "the waves curled darkly against the vessel." From the seamen, with looks of disappointment, we learned, that the prospect of a short voyage was at an end; and that, if the wind continued as it was, we might be kept at sea for several days: the badness of the weather increased towards evening, when a deluging rain came down, and continued the whole night. This calamity was further aggravated by a noisy old woman on board, who grated our ears with a horrible scream whenever a wave broke over the vessel, or a flash of lightning illuminated the scenery of

the storm; filling up the intervals with the cheering narrative of ships that were lost in the very track of our voyage. It was to no purpose that we endeavoured to joke away her fears, or to make them less eloquent; but Time, that great resolver of difficulties, transferring the disorder of her imagination to her stomach, quieted her alarm. At length the increasing rain forced every one for shelter towards the cabin: this was a hole about two yards by one and a half; not quite the latter dimension in height, and filthy to a degree that I shall not attempt to describe: into this place as many were squeezed as it could possibly contain.

Among our female companions were two genteel young Welch-women of considerable personal attractions, whose vivacity and good-nature had essentially contributed to the entertainment of the day: one of these was peculiarly bewitching; her's was

——————— the faultless form
Shap'd by the hand of harmony; the cheek
Where the live crimson, through the native white
Soft-shooting, o'er the face diffuses bloom,
And ev'ry nameless grace; the parted lip,
Like the red rose-bud moist with morning dew,
Breathing

Breathing delight; and, under flowing jet,
The neck slight-shaded, and the swelling breast;
The look resistless, piercing to the soul.

These damsels preferring the certainty of a wetting upon deck to the chance of suffocation in the cabin, we made it our business to defend them as much as possible from "the pelting of the pitiless storm." Our travelling coats were fashionably large; so that each of us was able completely to shelter one, without exposing ourselves; a bottle of brandy too, that we had fortunately provided, helped to counteract the inclemency of the weather, and we were for some time thoroughly comfortable. The rain at length, penetrating our coverings, obliged us to seek a fresh resource; but to discover one was no easy matter; for the cabin had not a chink unoccupied, and there was not a dry sail on board to make use of. In this predicament it fortunately occurred to one of the ladies, that before the hatchway was closed she observed sufficient room in the hold for three or four persons who were not very bulky to lie down: to this place we gained admittance; and, although the angles of chests and packages formed a very inappropriate couch for

the tender limbs of our friends, yet the retreat proved highly gratifying; and, after a short time spent in pleasing conversation, we enjoyed a refreshing sleep.—Unhallowed thoughts, be silent! voluptuous imaginations, conjure not up, from this pressure of circumstances, motives or actions that are unholy! It is true, the girls had charms that might warm an anchorite, and were filled with the glowing sensations of youthful passion; yet they were virtuous; nor had the tourists, although encountering temptation, a wish to endanger the possessors of qualities so lovely for a transitory enjoyment.

When we issued from our burrow the next morning, the rain continued; but the wind had abated, and become more favourable. The other passengers remained in the cabin, and nothing can be imagined more distressing than their situation. No less than ten women had squeezed themselves into the hole, where they lay all of a heap, like fish in a basket. The heat and confinement had rendered the sickness general: I shall forbear to describe the evidence of its effects; but briefly remark, that, overcome by pain and fatigue, they appeared all in a sound sleep, half released from

from their clothes, and with such an intermixture of heads, bodies, and limbs, that it required some ingenuity to trace the relation of the several parts. The two old French-horn players were lying at the door soaking in the rain, but also asleep. From such a scene we gladly withdrew, and in a few hours found ourselves at the entrance of SWANSEA BAY, finely encircled with high varied hills; on our left were the two insulated rocks called the Mumbles, at a small distance from the main land, where the whitened town of OSTERMOUTH* appeared issuing from the water, beneath a lofty dark hill. At the bottom of the bay, the superior extent of Swansea lined the shore, backed by an atmosphere of cloudy vapours produced from the numerous furnaces in its neighbourhood. At length I trod on Cambrian ground, and paid my half crown, with a willing engagement to forfeit a hundred times the sum,

* The practice of whitening their dwellings, in Wales, is very general, and of long standing. David ap Gwillim, a bard of the 14th century, thus notices it in his invocation to Summer: "With sun-shine morn gladden thou the place, and greet the whitened houses."

if ever I should be again caught on board of a Swansea Hoy *.

Swansea is a tolerably neat town, although irregularly built. It has long been a winter residence of the neighbouring gentry, and a favourite resort in summer for bathing; but its increasing opulence arises principally from the prosperity of its manufactures and commerce.

In company with Major Jones, a worthy magistrate of the town, to whose polite attention I stand indebted for much local information, I obtained a complete survey of SWANSEA CASTLE, (situated in the middle of the town), which, although much contracted from its former grand dimensions, is still of considerable extent. The principal feature of the building is, a massive quadrangular tower, remarkable for a range of light circular arches, encircling the top, and sup-

* Of the numerous vessels that sail from Bristol to Swansea, not one is fitted for passengers, and it was our misfortune to enter the worst in the service: we afterwards learned, that two superior vessels, Dimond and Hawkins masters, afford very tolerable accommodation. The sailing of these might be learned from a correspondence at Bristol, and a pleasant conveyance obtained,—at least for men.

porting

porting a parapet, which forms a connexion with turrets at each angle. This parapet affords a pleasing bird's-eye view of the town and surrounding country. The tenantable parts of the castle comprise the town-hall; a poor-house; a jail; a new market-house; numerous store-cellars; a blacksmith's and other shops and habitations; a Roman Catholic chapel; and a pigeon-house. The Gothic structure has been so far metamorphosed in its application to these purposes, that it is almost impossible to trace the original plan of the building; but the large apartment used for Romish worship has been either the baronial hall or the chapel: I think, the former.

During my stay in Swansea, an intoxicated man fell asleep on the parapet of the castle, and, rolling off, fell to the ground at the depth of near 80 feet. The poor fellow was a servant in the castle: and, missing his room in winding up the turreted stair-case, unconsciously extended his journey to the summit of the castle. Nothing broke his fall (unless the roof of a low shed reared against the wall, and which he went clearly through,

may be considered as a favourable impediment), and yet, incredible as it may seem! the only effect produced on the man, was a slight broken head, and a restoration of his faculties. He bound up his head himself, made the best of his way to a public-house, took a little more ale, and then went soberly to bed. I should scarcely have believed this miraculous escape, had I not seen the broken tiles and rafters through which he fell, and heard the attestations of numerous witnesses of the accident.

Swansea Castle was built A. D. 1113, by Henry Beaumont, Earl of Warwick, a Norman leader who conquered Gowerland, a tract of country bounded by the Neath and Loughor rivers, from the Welch; but it was soon after besieged by Griffith ap Rhys ap Theodore, a native chief, and a great part of the outbuildings destroyed. It is now the property of the Duke of Beaufort, Lord paramount of Gower.

A large tract of country northward of Swansea is covered with coal, copper, and iron-works, the operations of which are much facilitated by a canal passing among them. The dismal gloom of the manufactories, hanging

hanging over the river Tawe, is pleasingly contrasted by the whitened walls of their appendant villages, springing from the dark sides of the hills that rise above the river. Conspicuous above the other resorts of the manufacturers is MORRISTOWN, a neat newly-created village; and on the summit of a steep hill Morristown castle, a quadrangular building, which is the habitation of upwards of thirty families; these buildings owe their origin to Mr. Morris, a gentleman, who, in partnership with Mr. Lockwood, conducts one of the leading works. The introduction of Major Jones obtained me a view of Messrs. Freeman's copper manufactory: we took care to be there at noon, when the furnaces are tapped and all the interesting processes gone through. The effect in passing through these dismal buildings, contrasted by the vivid glare of the furnaces, and the liquid fire of the pouring metal, is to a stranger very striking. I was much surprized at the quantity of condensed sulphureous vapour that yellowed the roof of the building. Sulphur often forms the greatest bulk of the ore; yet no means are employed to collect the vapour, which

which might easily be managed, and could not fail of turning to a source of profit: at the same time, it would save the health of the workmen, and spare the vegetation, which appears stinted for a considerable distance by the noxious effluvia.

We left these sulphureous chambers to enjoy a purer air on the sea-shore, where another curiosity awaited us. As we were strolling on the sands, about a mile above the town, we remarked a group of figures, in birth-day attire, gamboling in the water: not suspecting that they were women, we passed carelessly on; but how great was our surprize, on approaching them, to find that the fact did not admit of a doubt. We had not paused a minute, before they all came running toward us, with a menacing tone and countenance, that would seem to order us away. Though we did not understand their British sentences, we obeyed, and very hastily too, on finding a volley of stones rattling about our ears. This hostile demonstration, we afterwards found, arose from a suspicion that we were going to remove their clothes, a piece of waggery often practised by the visitants of Swansea, to enjoy their running

running *nudiores ovo.* The girls knew that we were not their countrymen, or we should have passed unconcerned; unless, indeed, acquaintances, who would have made their usual salutation, and perhaps joined in the party's amusement. In our subsequent rambles on the beach these liberal exhibitions of Cambrian beauty afforded us many pleasing studies of unsophisticated nature:

> "Graceful, cleanly, smooth and round;
> "All in Vénus' girdle bound."

From Swansea we made an excursion across the sands to Ostermouth castle, about four miles distant, situated on an eminence near the coast. The principal walls of this ruin are little injured by time, and most of the apartments may be readily distinguished; the general figure is polygonal, and the ramparts are conspicuously lofty, but unflanked by towers, except at the entrance: a profusion of ivy overspreading the ruin rather conceals than adorns it. This building is supposed to have been erected by the Norman conqueror of Gowerland, and has almost ever since remained the property of that Lordship.

From

From some high hills behind Ostermouth, an extensive view is obtained over the peninsula of Gower, and the two noble bays of Swansea and Caermarthen, which its projection divides: the general aspect of the peninsula is wild and dreary. Not far distant, near the little bay of Oxwich, are the ruins of Pennarth castle, a fortress built soon after the Beaumonts conquered Gowerland; and on the opposite side of the bay stands the more picturesque ruin of Penrice castle; so called after the Penrice's, a Norman family that settled there in the reign of Edward the First. This castle is comprised in an extensive domain belonging to Mr. Talbot, which occupies a great part of the peninsula; and here Mr. Talbot has erected an elegant villa, with all the appendant beauties of wood and lawn, lake, and promenade. But, unless with a view to improve the estate, one can scarcely imagine what motive could induce this gentleman to desert his former residence at Margam, possessing all the allurements of favoured nature, and situated in the midst of an agreeable neighbourhood, to force exotic elegance upon a bleak unfrequented coast, and

and fix his abode far from the usual haunts of society.

About three miles northward of Penrice, upon a mountain called Cum Bryn, near Llanridian, is a table-like monument or cromlech *, called Arthur's stone: it consists of a huge flat stone, supposed to weigh near twenty tons, supported upon six or seven others about five feet in height; the smaller stones are placed in a circle.—A few miles farther, near the mouth of the Loughor, is Webley castle, which was described to me as a place of considerable antique strength, and as being still entire and partially inhabited. The difficulty of access to this castle, and its out-of-the-way situation, prevented our visiting it; similar reasons also prevented our seeing a curiosity at Wormshead point, a bold promontory jutting far into the sea, and divided from the main land at high-water by the sea's overflowing its low isthmus. Near the

* The cromlech is certainly a relic of the Druidical age. It is variously contended to have been a place of worship, a sepulchral monument, and an altar for sacrifice. The latter opinion appears to me best supported; nor can I look on a cromlech without adverting to those horrid rites wherein human victims were immolated by Druid-craft to excite the terrors of superstition.

extremity

extremity of the point is a cleft in the ground, in which if dust or sand be thrown, it will be returned back into the air; and a person applying his ear to the crevice will hear a deep noise, like the blowing of a large pair of bellows: this effect is reasonably attributed to the concussions of the waves of the sea in the cavernous hollows of the cliff. An old author, I think Giraldus Cambrensis, speaks of a similar phenomenon in Barry island, near the coast between Cardiff and Cowbridge; but at present no such effect is produced at that place.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

LOUGHOR—LLANELLY—PEMBREE-HILL—KIDWELLY, AND ITS CASTLE.

HAVING satisfied ourselves with the peninsula of Gower, we entered upon a zig-zag excursion round the coast of South-Wales, to its northern boundary, purposing to return to Swansea by a midland route. My friend had bought an excellent travelling horse, though aged, and a little foundered, for twelve pounds. I was not so fortunate; the few others that we met with for sale, were miserable poneys, and at a price double their value in London: I was, therefore, constrained to engage a poor little hack, at two guineas for a fortnight's use; and thus mounted we set forward over a high romantic district to Loughor, the Leucarium of Antoninus, now a poor village; but still exhibiting the ruined keep of its castle, on a raised mount surrounded by a moat. From this

place,

place, soiled with the filth of neighbouring collieries, we had a river to ford to the opposite shore. This task is by no means enviable; for, in addition to fording a rapid current over a rough stoney bottom, large hollows are formed by vessels at low water, which, not appearing, sometimes entrap the unsuspecting traveller, who may think himself well off if he escape with only a ducking: we thanked our stars when we got across; and, wading through a miserable road, and a region of collieries, arrived at LLANELLY (pronounced Llanithly). About half way between the ford and this town, we observed Capel Ddewy, a small ruin, picturesquely accompanied by a yew-tree; and near it the remains of some deserted furnaces.

In this ride we proceeded at an uncertainty, till we were fortunately assisted by an agreeable matron, who was churning at the door of her cottage. Now, as the noise of her employment prevented our hearing each other, she was obliged to leave off; but, that the interval of a few moments from labour might not pass unproductively, she caught up her knitting needles at the same instant,

instant, and advanced the fabric of a stocking while she gave us our directions. Such instances of persevering industry were frequent throughout the principality; but more particularly so from hence westward, where not a female was to be seen unemployed in knitting, however she might be otherwise at work, in carrying loads or driving cattle.

Llanelly is a small irregular town, and contains an old seat of Sir John Stepney's, which, though deserted by the family, afforded habitation to numerous tenants, till the mischievous operation of the window-tax, in driving them out, left it to moulder in decay. The high square embattled tower of its church is remarkable, in being much wider at the base than upwards, forming a sort of cone. This town, however, offering no objects to detain us, we proceeded without halting, and in a few miles ride gained the summit of Pembree hill.

Here a marine view of great extent burst upon us; the grand sweep of Caermarthen bay appeared beneath, terminated on one side by Wormshead point, and on the other by the insulated rock of Caldy in Pembrokeshire; the opposite shores of Somerset and

Devon formed the distance, faintly skirting the horizon beyond a vast expanse of sea, studded with numerous vessels. Looking internally, the country exhibited a strong undulatory surface, variously chequered with wild heaths and rich cultivation. Descending the hill, we approached the neat regular-built town of new KIDWELLY, situated in a narrow well-wooded valley.

The castle forms a noble object, adjoining the ruins of old Kidwelly on the opposite bank of the river. Leland says, "the old town is prettily waullid, and hath hard by the the waul a Castel; the old town is nearly al desolated but the castel is meately well kept up." This description applies very well to the present appearance of the place; for, though the castle is uninhabited, it continues tolerably entire. This fortress was built soon after the Conquest, by Maurice de Londres, one of the twelve Norman knights who conquered Glamorgan-shire; and, after undergoing the usual vicissitudes of sieges, partial demolition, and different masters, fell to the crown of England. We were disappointed of an internal examination of this fine ruin, as the key of the entrance could not readily be

J. T. Barber delin.

S. Alken Jun. sculp.

Tutbury Castle.

be obtained, and we were pressed for time to reach Caermarthen before dark. The continuance of our route led us on a steep woody bank, above the romantic course of Kidwelly river; but it soon deviated to the superior attractions of the Towey; following whose expansive water and verdant accompaniments, and crossing a long antique bridge, we reached Caermarthen.

CHAP. III.

CAERMARTHEN — FEMALE LABOURERS — LLANSTEPHAN CASTLE — A FORD — LAUGHARNE CASTLE — FINE MARINE VIEWS — NEW INN — TENBY.

THE situation of Caermarthen, one of the most wealthy and polite towns in Wales, can scarcely be enough admired; rising above a noble river, and commanding a full view of one of the most beautiful vales in the kingdom. Internally, there is less to commend; as most of the streets are very steep, and irregularly built; yet there are many good private houses, belonging to the neighbouring gentry that resort here in the winter months; and a handsome town-hall and some other buildings do credit to the public spirit of the town, though a solitary church may reflect but little on its sanctity. Very small remains of the castle, now built up into a gaol, appear; or of the walls that formerly encom-

passed

passed the town. The trade of the place is much facilitated by its fine river, which conveys ships of a good size up to the bridge.

Caermarthen is the Kaervyrdhin of the Britons, the Maridunum of Ptolemy, and the Muridunum of Antoninus. The ancient Britons reckoned it the capital of all Wales: here they held their Parliaments, or Assemblies of wise men, and here fixed their Chancery and Exchequer. When the Normans overran Wales, this town severely felt the miseries of war, being often besieged, and twice burnt by the Welch princes; Gilbert Earl of Clare, however, at length fixed his power at Caermarthen beyond the reach of their attempts. This place gave birth to the famous Merlin in the year 480: he appears to have been a man of extraordinary wisdom and learning, which, no doubt, occasioned him to be looked upon as a magician in that dark age, and transmitted as such to posterity by Monkish writers, who always looked with an evil eye upon knowledge possessed out of their craft. Here also was born Lewis Bayly, chaplain to James the First, afterwards Bishop of Bangor, and author of the celebrated "Practice of Piety."

From our comfortable quarters at the Green Dragon, we set out early in the morning; and, on leaving the town, were more interested than pleased, in noticing several fine young women who were acting as scavengers, while one, whose elegance of form defied even her awkward habit to conceal it, was bending beneath the fatigue of wheeling away the filth in a barrow. In the same point of view, seated behind a counter, a brawny-fisted fellow was folding up ribbons and laces. How odious is the employ of men-milliners! How shameful, that men, who might gain a prosperous livelihood in a thousand ways, should interfere with almost the only eligible means which the limited powers and habits of women capacitate them to adopt for a maintenance! Driven from their natural employ, they must either have recourse to a cruel drudgery which they were not formed, and are generally unable, to endure; or wander after subsistence in the paths of shame and misery, at once a disgrace, a burthen, and a terror to society. But does our censure more properly fall on these men, for entering into the pretty dalliance of women's affairs, in preference to masculine pursuits requiring intellectual and

bodily

bodily exertion? or on the ladies, who encourage men, rather than their own sex, in the fiddle-faddle arrangement of their caps and tuckers?

Passing this group, we soon left the high road, and struck off into a narrow imbowered lane, up a laborious ascent, toward Llanstephan Castle. On arriving at the top of the hill, we were amply repaid for our toil by a most enchanting view over the Vale of the Towey: a stripe of the richest verdure, intersected with numerous hedge-rows and ornamental plantations, arose on each side of the river; above which, a parallel range of high-wooded and cultivated hills formed the boundary of the valley. The extensive town of Caermarthen; the lofty spire of its church; the ruined castle, and the long old bridge, with several barks lying near it; were conspicuous objects at a short distance in the picture; which was considerably enlivened by several gentlemen's seats, and their appendant decorations. The town of Abergwilly, on the banks of the river, with the bishop of St. David's palace, an ordinary building, would also have appeared in the distance; but the termination of the valley was denied us, by

the morning mist not having cleared away. Pursuing our route, we took every opportunity that intervals in the hedge afforded, of renewing our treat, and discovered new beauties at each succeeding station.

At length we parted with this agreeable scenery; and soon after, on a sudden turn of the lane, came within view of the picturesque ruin of Llanstephan castle. A farming party also appeared at this instant, proceeding with goods for Caermarthen market. This group was opened by a robust young fellow driving a couple of cows; he wore the general dress of the country, a short blue coarse cloth coat, and breeches of the same open at the knees; but he also possessed the luxury of shoes and stockings. A sledge loaded with sacks of grain followed; drawn by a horse, on which a lusty wench sat astride, as the peasant girls generally do in Wales; cloathed in a brown jirkin and petticoat, but with her lower extremities uncovered. She urged on the horse by kicking him with her bare heels, while her hands were busied in knitting. Two other buxom bare-legged girls followed on foot, with their fingers similarly employed, and with large baskets of eggs and poultry on their

J.T.Barber delin. J.Jeakes sculp.

Llanstephan Castle.

their heads. But a word on the sledge, the common farming carriage in Wales.—This is a most simple contrivance, consisting of two rude poles, between which the horse is placed; their ends trail on the ground, toward which extremity there are two or three cross bars; a few upright sticks from these complete the carriage. A comely dame, seated on horseback, and accommodated with a sort of side-saddle made with cross rails, was probably the mistress; she closed the rear; and her superior condition was evident, in her dark blue worsted stockings, ponderous shoes, and small brass buckles.

LLANSTEPHAN CASTLE crowns the summit of a bold hill, whose precipitous base is washed by the sea. Its broken walls inclose a large area; and, furnished with several encircling earthen ramparts, appear to have possessed considerable antique strength. From numerous stations it offers a truly picturesque appearance; and in the approach charmingly combines with the surrounding landscape; which, ever varying, is sometimes confined to the woody character; at others, exhibits the wide estuary, the rocky promontory forming its opposite shore, and the boundless sea.

This

This castle is said to have been built by the sons of Uchtred, prince of Merionethshire, anno Domini 1138; but soon after fell into the hands of the Normans and Flemings; in 1145 it was taken from them by Cadelh, son of Rhys Prince of South Wales; and so vigorously maintained, that the utmost force which the foreigners could raise was unable to retake it. However, by the year 1189 it must have been in the possession of the English, as Caradoc informs us that it was then taken from them by Prince Rhys.

The village, a neat humble place, is snugly situated beneath the "Castle-cap'd hill" in a woody hollow; whence we traversed a lofty ridge, commanding extensive views, to a neighbouring estuary, formed by the Tave near its junction with the sea. As the tide was out, we could not avail ourselves of the ferry, but had ample directions where the water might be crossed; yet, unfortunately, on arriving at the sands, the description of circumstances received for our guidance proved so general, that we were unable to select the route intended; and the broad current ran with such threatening rapidity into the sea, only half a mile distant, that it would have been

been highly dangerous to have ventured in upon hazard. Ignorant how to proceed, and unwilling to return three or four miles for fresh directions, we gladly observed a couple of young women trudging on the sands in a direction toward us. The proper place for fording was now pointed out, where, it was said, the water would scarcely cover our horses' knees; we deemed it most prudent, however, to let the natives go first, and they accordingly entered the river, using the precaution of raising their drapery. We followed close; but the lasses had considerably underrated the depth of the water, for it took both them and our horses above their middles; yet so carefully were their clothes held up, that not a thread was wetted. On reaching the opposite shore, their petticoats were suffered to descend: my friend and I then looked at each other, passed an observation, returned our thanks to the damsels, wished them a good morrow; and under an overhanging rock of red granite, crowned with the ivy-mantled remains of LAUGHARNE CASTLE, reached the town, an irregularly built little place, seated on a low bank of the estuary.

Laugharne

Laugharne castle, though not very extensive, and not generally striking for picturesque disposition, has a noble aspect toward the town. The foundation of this Castle is not transmitted to us in the Welch annals, but is, doubtless, of high antiquity; it was occupied, and probably built, by the Normans and Flemings on their conquest of these parts; afterwards, in the year 1215, it was besieged and taken by Llewelyn: Leland says, "it longid some time to the Earl of Northumberland." An interesting ride, upon a high boundary of the sea, brought us into PEMBROKESHIRE, at a place called New Inn.

In this progress, extensive views ranging over the Bristol channel were continual; but one *coup d'œil*,

> High from the summit of a craggy cliff
> Hung o'er the deep ———

was eminently striking! magnificently beautiful! The whole sweep of Caermarthen bay, with its several estuaries, high cliffs, and swelling shores, appeared beneath us, extending in one direction to the extreme point of Gower, and in the other to the isle of Caldy in Pembrokeshire; at the latter termination, the picturesque whitened town of Tenby, romantically

cally built on a tongue of rock projecting into the sea, seemed issuing from the waves. From the grand amphitheatre of this bay, the eye roamed, over a vast tract of sea, to the shores of Somerset and Devon, near fifty miles distant, faintly penciled on the horizon, and terminated by the advancing swell of Lundy Island. Further westward, the setting sun appeared in conjunction with the sea, there widening into the Atlantic Ocean; its golden effulgence glittered in reflexion from the waves, and diffused itself over the whole scenery: numerous barks in the bay, sailing on different tacks, caught partial gleams of illumination; and a large fleet of ships, entering the channel at a remote distance, seemed little more than dusky spots on the glistening expanse: the *tout ensemble* formed one of the most pleasing marine pictures that I ever saw.—The sea, viewed under its ordinary circumstances, from a *low* situation, engages little interest; the angle of vision is then intersected by the aqueous segment at the distance of four or five miles; and, with little more breadth of water than one meets with in a river or lake, the prospect finishes in a mere hard line. The case is far otherwise

wise when it is viewed from a high mountain, particularly if that mountain be a bold promontory, and the view bursts upon the spectator on a sudden: a world of waters then meets his astonished sight; the immense object presses on his mind an inconceivable emotion; and an image is at once stamped of the genuine sublime. Filled with the vast idea, he contemplates with awe and veneration the magnitude of his Creator's works, and sinks into a proper estimate the puny atchievements of man.

From New Inn, a small collection of cottages on the beach, with a large old mansion lately modernized, but seemingly of the foundation of Elizabeth's time, and where (it is to be observed) there is no house of public entertainment, as the name would imply, we passed, among numerous collieries belonging to Lord Milford, towards TENBY. This town is curiously situated on the ridge of a narrow rock projecting into the sea: a sandy tract connects it with the main land; which being sometimes overflowed, the town becomes insulated. The streets of Tenby are inconveniently steep; yet its romantic situation, and commodious sands for bathing, have lately

lately rendered it a place of fashionable resort. It has a number of good lodging-houses, with a respectable hotel; and, when we were there, boasted an overflow of genteel company. The quay was well lined with vessels, and the whole carried with it an air of opulence. Here was formerly an important fishery, but that concern is now much diminished; yet the exportation of coals has greatly increased, and that article has become the staple commodity of the place. The remains of Tenby castle (a Norman structure) are very inconsiderable: the broken walls appear toward the extremity of the cliff; and below them, I understand, there are some large natural caverns.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

MANORBEER CASTLE—AN ADVENTURE—A DILEMMA—CAREW CASTLE—LAWRENNY—PEMBROKE—ITS CASTLE—LAMPHEY COURT—STACKPOLE COURT—BOSHERSTON MEER.

ON a tempestuous day, a day fraught with trouble and alarm, we left Tenby, and took the Pembroke road traced on a ridge of hills, which command extensive views over almost the whole of Pembrokeshire, and a great part of the Bristol channel; but a heavy atmosphere frowned on the scenery, and threatened a violent storm. Leaving the high road, we descended toward the sea coast in search of the gloomy remains of MANORBEER CASTLE, and found the ruin wildly situated as described by Leland, "between two little hillettes," whose rocky bases repelled the fury of an angry sea. This fortress appears to have been of Norman erection; it fell to

the

the Crown in the reign of Henry the First; a grant from James the First presented it to the Bowens of Trelogne; from them it descended by marriage into the family of Picton Castle, and in the year 1740 was the property of Sir Erasmus Philips, Bart. The ponderous towers and massive fragments of this castle denote its original strength and importance to have been considerable; yet now, deprived of "the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war," it exhibits a scene so wild and desolate, as might disclaim all intercourse with man: rank grass clothes every projection; "the thistle shakes its lonely head" from the windows, the sea-bird screams through the hall, and adders creep where many a warrior stalked. From our reverie over this gloomy relic of feudal despotism, we were alarmed by a vivid flash of lightning; a loud clap of thunder succeeded, which, reverberating through the ruin, had a most impressive effect: the storm became violent, and seemed to shake the mouldering battlements of the ruin; "from their hills the "groaning oaks came down, the sea darkly "tumbled beneath the blast, and the roaring "waves were climbing against our rocks."

A deluging rain now poured down, and drove us in search of a shelter; the fragments of a spiral staircase offered a descent to a subterraneous part of the castle, and we entered the dark recess of a dungeon, whose mysterious gloom and earthy exhalations might stir up fancy to create things worse

"Than fables yet have feign'd, or fear conceiv'd."

I thought I heard a voice; my friend thought so too: we listened, but soon smiled at the conjecture; it was probably the hoarse roar of the sea or "eddying winds:" but the damp air of the dungeon threw a chill over us, that was even worse than an exposure to the rain; and we were returning, when a repetition of the noise that we heard before stopped us: we listened, and distinctly heard more than one human voice; the words were undistinguishable, but the tone severe and menacing; all was again silent. My friend and I looked at each other, but neither ventured to impart his thoughts. Conjecture, however, did not remain idle. Was this a horde of those barbarous men that we had heard of as inhabiting these coasts, who, by setting up false lights, betray the unsuspecting mariners

on

on rocks and shoals, and then plunder the wreck, often murdering the crew who may attempt to defend their property? Or was it a gang of smugglers? for such men were known to conceal their stores in unfrequented ruins, and other wild seclusions. We were inclined to favour this latter opinion; but derived little satisfaction from it, on considering that they were scarcely inferior to the former in ferocity; and that if they discovered us, every thing was to be apprehended from a brutal policy, to preserve the secret of their hiding-place.

Our reflections were broken off by a further noise, and we plainly heard a hoarse cautioning voice utter, "Only you mind, and we shall have 'em both." We again appealed to each other's countenances, but no confidence appeared in either; in silence, I threw out the tuck of my stick; my friend drew a sword from his; for we were so far armed against attack. Again all was hushed; and we ventured to raise ourselves from the dungeon, in order to catch a glimpse of the people with whom we had to deal; when a strong flash of lightning illuminated the whole ruin; and from an aperture near its base, we

saw two men emerge; the one armed with a gun, the other with a spade:—I thought I had never seen two such murderous-looking fellows: we shrunk to our concealment instinctively; yet not without an apprehension that we had been seen. But our sensations may be easier imagined than described, when within a few yards one of them was heard to say, "Why did you not bring your gun? I shou'dn't wonder if one got away:" which was answered by, "Only you make sure of one, and I'll engage to knock the other's brains out."

Now knowing the worst, we determined on sallying out; if possible, to reach a little village that we had observed at no great distance; or, if discovered, to endeavour upon closing in with the gunsman before he could take aim. We sprung forward together, and had nearly reached the great entrance when the gun went off; and in the same moment I saw my friend extended among the fragments of the ruin:—without stopping, I rushed on toward the ruffian, hoping to use my stick with good effect before the piece could be re-loaded; when, passing under the portal, down the crevice where formerly the

portcullis

J.T. Barber delin.

S. Alken Jun. Sculp.

Caren Castle.

portcullis was suspended, a large fox darted and passed before me. A loud voice now exclaimed, "Dang it you've missed hur;" and with no less joy than astonishment I beheld my friend brandishing his sword behind me; we said nothing, but pushed on together, and, suddenly turning an angle, met the villains face to face. Again joy and astonishment struggled for pre-eminence;—they recoiled from us, and, dropping their weapons, with a loud yell darted out of sight!

Such dastardly conduct may appear irreconcilable with the ferocious design of which we suspected them; but cowardice is no stranger to cruelty; and the direct tenor of their expressions forbade a rising suggestion that they intended us no harm. Gathering up the gun and spade as trophies of our victory, and remounting our horses, which remained as they were left, tied up in a nook, we proceeded to the neighbouring village, or rather two or three cottages. By the way I learned, that upon the report of the gun, my friend fell in consequence of turning short upon the slippery fragments of the ruin. On our approaching the village, a number of

men, women, and children, appeared crowding together with great eagerness; and we were no sooner perceived, than an evident alarm pervaded the cluster, in which was included the two ruffians. However, the peaceable demeanour of the tourists, and the superiority of numbers on the side of the natives, united in procuring a parley; when it evidently appeared that a double misconception had taken place: the men in whose countenances we had read the prognostics of homicide, turned out to be two honest young farmers, who had traced a couple of notorious robbers that had long infested the neighbourhood (a brace of foxes) to their retreat in the castle ruins. This account brought with it a new application of the sentences that we had heard, and we were ashamed of our misconstruction; but the men were not behindhand with us; for, as they frankly declared, from our sudden appearance, they took us either for ghosts or devils. The gun and spade were now returned; and, instead of a deadly encounter, an exchange of good wishes took place, on our leaving the villagers in the pursuit of our journey.

By

By the time we had reascended to the turnpike, the evening was closing apace; and this circumstance, with the uncomfortable state of the weather, made it a great object with us to take up our night's quarters as soon as possible. Pembroke was eight miles distant, Carew (called Carey) only two or three, as we were informed by some country-people; we therefore struck off into a bridle-road for the latter place, under their direction; but soon found ourselves at a loss which to choose of three roads that presented themselves; yet, seeing no one of whom we could enquire, we were obliged to advance at hazard; and, after a long ride through mire and loose stones, on meeting with a cottager, were directed to return all the way back, and take a different route. This vexatious task performed, we found ourselves again at a loss, and again took a false route. We were now completely enveloped in the darkness of night; the weather continued stormy; and our craggy road hardly wore the distinctness of a track. In this forlorn condition we slowly paced on, not exclaiming like Ossian's chief, "Let clouds rest on "the hills, spirits fly, and travellers fear;

" let the winds of the woods arise, the sound-
" ing storms descend; roar streams, and
" windows flap, and green-winged meteors
" fly; rise the pale moon from behind her
" hills, or inclose her head in clouds, night
" is alike to me, blue, stormy, or gloomy
" the sky." Alas! it made a sensible difference to us; but at length a distant glimmering of light appeared between the trees, which we gladly traced to a lonely cottage. Here, on our calling out, a tall raw-boned man opened the door, and discovered three others who were regaling round a blazing hearth: these were all miners in a neighbouring coal-work. The uniform black appearance of this group, their long matted hair half hiding their faces, which caught a ferocious turn from the strong partial light of the fire, was not calculated to inspire prepossession in their favour; but, though in the exterior repulsive as their cheerless occupation, their hearts were not estranged from sensations of benevolence; and yet, so little had they of refinement, as to offer no complimentary condolence on hearing of our difficulties; even yet more unfashionably, by actual services they relieved them. " Mas-
" ters,"

"ters," said one of the men, "if you 'll but "step in a minute while I finish my mess of "porridge, I'll put you into the right road; "it can't be darker than it is; do sit down, "and let me put your horses in the cow-"house; I suppose you wou'd n't like our "fare (it was a mess of barley and greens "stewed with a bit of meat or bacon); but "mother can give you a drop of good mead, "and some decentish bread and butter." This invitation, with the manner in which it was conveyed, offered a relief that neither of us was inclined to reject; for, indeed, we had tasted nothing since breakfast, and besides found that some barley might be had for our horses. So seating ourselves in the chimney corner, we partook of the refreshments brought us by an old withered matron, who finished a scene forming a lively counterpart to that of the cavern in Gil Blas. Our dame soon took a leading part in conversation; she gratefully expatiated on the bounty of Providence in sending us a plentiful year, and lamented the misery that prevailed last winter, when, she declared, they were all starving, and many of her neighbours died outright of hunger. This statement I found general throughout the

the country. We left this humble but hospitable roof with regret; nor was it without much difficulty that we could prevail on our hostess to accept of a trifling acknowledgement for her favours.

We again set forward through mire and darkness, conducted by one of the men, who beguiled the time with stories of ghosts that had been seen at Manorbeer castle. At length it became somewhat lighter, and we parted with our friendly guide upon his shewing us the strait road to CAREW. "Cold and comfort-"less," we knocked at the inn door (for inn is the name of every alehouse in Wales); when, to put a finishing stroke to the troubles of this eventful day, we learned that they had neither beds for us nor stabling for our horses; but we had previously heard, that the village boasted two inns, and accordingly went to the other: a similar information, however, awaited us here; with the additional intelligence, that there was not a stable in the village, and only one spare bed, which was at the other alehouse; there was no alternative; we were constrained to turn our tired and hungry horses into a field, and go back to the first house.

Here

Here our apartment served not only "for "parlour and kitchen and hall," but likewise for bed-room: every thing was in unison, the discoloured state of the walls and furniture; the care-worn looks of our host and hostess; our scanty fare, consisting of hard barley bread and salt butter; with nauseating ale, that even our keen appetites rejected; all betokened poverty and wretchedness: while in the bed, which extended from one side of the room to the other, two children were sending forth the most discordant yells; the one suffering a violent toothache, and the other crying because its brother cried. After enduring this scene of purgatory upwards of an hour, we were shewn to our bed: it was a recess built in an adjoining room, and furnished with a bag of straw, which was kept in its place by a couple of boards crossing the niche. In the same room was another bed, where two more pledges of our landlord's tender passion continued to torment us. Vexed with accumulating plagues, we threw ourselves half undressed on the bed; but our evil destiny had yet more troubles in store;—the sheets were wringing wet; so that we had reason to expect

pect that on the morrow we should be laid up with colds or fevers; but this apprehension was soon superseded; for a legion of fleas attacked us at all points with such persevering ferocity, that we were kept in motion the whole night; a number of rats also, by gamboling among our straw, while others were busy in grating a sally port through the partition, held us in the fidgets; and thus the danger of obstructed circulation was avoided. We had just left off cursing rustic accommodation, and the itch for travelling which had led us to these sufferings, when the door opened; no light appeared, but the sound of footsteps, softly treading, passed near us. Suspecting foul play, we instantly sprang up, and caught hold of a poor ragged girl, who acted as maid of the inn, and was going to sleep with the children in the other bed.

This kind of rural accommodation may appear very diverting in a narrative; but to those accustomed to better fare, it will be found a very serious evil. Indeed, from this specimen we afterwards made it a rule to finish our day's journey at a good town; in consequence of which salutary resolution, except

except in one or two instances, we were never without a comfortable lodging. This caution is very practicable in South Wales, as the most interesting part of the country is well furnished with accommodation.

On issuing from our house of mortification, we were regaled with a fine view of CAREW CASTLE, situated on a gentle swell above an arm of Milford-haven. Its extensive remains shew it to have been rather a splendid palace, than a mere fortress; and it evidently appears the work of different ages. The North front, a portion looking over the river, is scarcely castellated, but exhibits the mode of building in use about the time of Henry the Eighth. From the level of this front, the windows, square and of grand dimensions, project in large bows: internally, this part is highly ornamented; and a chimney-piece with Corinthian columns appears among the latest decorations of the structure. The great hall, built in the ornamented Gothic style, though much dilapidated, is still a noble relic of antique grandeur. Other parts of the building are of more remote date, and most of the walls are remarkably thick and of solid masonry: a peculiarity to be noticed; as the Welch

Welch castles are chiefly constructed of grout-work *. The subterraneous dungeons are remarkably extensive, and assimilate with the grandeur of the general design. This castle was anciently a residence of the Welch princes, and given by one of them (Rhys ap Theodore), with extensive lands, as a marriage portion with his daughter, to Gerald de Cario, an Anglo-Norman chieftain, and ancestor of the last proprietor of the castle; who, according to the tradition of the neighbourhood, died a hundred and seventy years ago; since which time the castle has been left to decay.

Here many a lofty tower of once menacing aspect lies hid in a leafy umbrage. The spacious hall, that in feudal ages glittered in baronial splendor, is now engrafted with ivy, or in mouldering fragments lies an undistinguished heap with the common earth: where once was attuned the sweet song of minstrelsy, is now heard the hoarse note of the raven; no more the high-wrought arras shakes mysteriously from the walls, but an unaffected profusion of ivy mantles the forsaken apartments; beasts graze where dark-

* See the Introduction, Section 3.

plumed

plumed barons sat arrayed; and the hallowed chamber of "my lady bright" is become the resort of bats and screech-owls.

Here the enthusiast, while scanning Gothic halls and "cloud-cap'd towers," may feel his mind transported to the ages of chivalry, and image all the pageantry of feudal shews! Or, in more humble mood, may look upon their faded grandeur, and venerate a silent monitor of human ostentation.

As we admired the picturesque beauty of this scene, or indulged in the moral reflections to which it gave rise, we forgot our inconveniences and fatigue, and cheerfully returned to the inn. Our horses were in waiting: poor animals! they had no intellectual set-off to the solid ill fare that they met with; but, unrid of the previous day's mire, proceeded with us on the road to Pembroke. On leaving the village, we observed a Gothic cross on the side of the road, about twelve or fourteen feet high, and apparently formed of a single stone: it was carved all over with knots and scrolls, but we did not stop to examine it minutely. On ascending a hill, we had a grand view of the castle: indeed, it is from the south and south-west alone that its important

important dimensions fully appear: hence also we saw the elevated mansion of LAWRENNY, seated on a lofty bank of an arm of Milford-haven, and beautifully accompanied with wood and lawn. This place, particularly excelling in natural beauties, is considered as one of the first seats in Pembrokeshire; and we understood that it had received much improvement from the taste and liberality of Mr. Barlow, the present proprietor. A ride on an elevated ridge, which but for the morning mists would have commanded extensive views, brought us to Pembroke.

The town of PEMBROKE principally consists of one wide street built along the ridge of a hill (washed by an arm of Milford-haven), and terminated at one extremity by its castle. Although of late declining in commercial importance, the aspect of the town is neat and genteel. Leland says of this town in his time, "it is welle wauled and hath iii gates, "est, west, and north; of the wich the est "gate is fairest and strongest, having afore hit "a compasid tour, not rofid; in the entering "where of is a Portcalys, *ex solido ferro*." Of these erections there are now but very imperfect remains; we observed, however, that

J. T. Barber delin.

S. Alken, jun.r sculp.

Pembroke Castle.

that the north gate was still in tolerable repair.

PEMBROKE CASTLE is a noble ruin, seated on a cliff above the river. Caradoc of Llancaroon says, that it was founded by Arnulph, son to the Earl of Shrewsbury, anno 1094; but Giraldus Cambrensis fixes the time of its erection in the reign of Henry the First, and the rounded arches that occur in the building determine its foundation not to have been later than that prince's reign. The most remarkable features of this ruin are, the grand entrance, which is still entire; and the juliet, or high round tower, the antient citadel, which has still the "Rofe of stone almost in "conum; the top whereof is covered with a "flat mille stone;" as described by Leland. The walls of this tower are fourteen feet in thickness; its diameter within is twenty-five feet, and its height to the top of the dome seventy-five feet: from mortices in the walls, this tower appears to have been divided into four floors. The ruined chapel also is a conspicuous object viewed externally;—and immediately underneath it, in the body of the rock, is the Wogan, a grand cavern deemed natural: if it be so, however, Nature has taken more

pains in turning it correctly circular, and raising its elevated roof, than she generally is found to have done in works of this kind. Its diameter is fifty-three feet; and just within the entrance we observed a spiral staircase which led through the rock to the chapel within the castle. From the foundations of an outwork, which we traced among shrubs and brambles on the margin of the river, opposite the cavern's mouth, it appears to have been less a place of concealment than an avowed sally-port, or regular entrance from the river. The castle is remarkable in history for having been the birth-place of Henry the Seventh; and also for the gallant defence that it made for Charles the First.

About two miles from Pembroke, near the road to Tenby, is LAMPHEY COURT, an episcopal palace belonging to the see of St. David's; and, after the alienation, a residence of Lord Essex's, the favourite of Elizabeth. This dilapidated structure is chiefly remarkable for a light parapet, raised on arches encircling the building, similar to the one noticed at Swansea. From Pembroke, a road extends southward through an uninteresting district to STACKPOOLE COURT, the seat of Lord

Lord Cawdor, situated in a deep romantic valley near the sea-coast. The mansion is worthy of its noble owner; and the finely-wooded park and grounds exhibit a more luxuriant verdure than might be expected so near a sea-beat promontory. A short distance westward, upon the coast, is St. Govin's chapel; and near it, a well of the same name, thought by the country people to be miraculous in the cure of several disorders. We have since regretted our not visiting the sea-cliffs in this neighbourhood, which we are told assume a very grand and romantic appearance. In the same neighbourhood we find described BOSHERSTON-MEER, "a pool "of water so deep that it could never be "sounded; yet before a storm it is said to "bubble, foam, and make a noise so loud "as to be heard at several miles distance. "The banks are of no great circumference at "the top, but broader downwards, and at a "considerable depth is a great breach towards "the sea, which is about a furlong distant, "and is supposed to have a subterraneous "communication with it *."

* A Description of England and Wales, Vol. VII.

CHAP. V.

LITTLE ENGLAND BEYOND WALES—MILFORD-HAVEN—WELCH BEAUTIES—HAVERFORDWEST FAIR—THE TOWN, CASTLE, AND PRIORY—PICTON CASTLE—HABBERSTON—MILFORD.

IN the reign of Henry the First, a colony of Flemings, driven from their country by an inundation, were permitted to settle in the western neighbourhood of Milford-haven. These were often attacked by the Welch, but unsuccessfully: they soon extended their territory over a great part of the county, and, in conjunction with the Normans, carried their arms as far as Llanstephan. Camden calls this district, "LITTLE ENGLAND beyond Wales;" and the difference of appearance, customs, and language, between the inhabitants of southern Pembrokeshire and their neighbours, is strikingly obvious at the present day. The tourist in Caermarthenshire

shire will scarcely meet a peasant who speaks a word of English; but in an hour's ride, towards Pembroke, he will find it universally spoken. I remarked this to mine host at Carew; who exultingly assured me, that Pembrokeshire was out of Wales; that he (a native of the place) was an Englishman; and that for his part he did not understand any thing of the Welch gibberish.

The men, tall and well made, evidently incline more to the English character than the Welch; yet they possess some personal traits distinct from either: I imagined, indeed, in many of the peasantry a resemblance to the present inhabitants of Flanders. Although this corner of the principality is the most remote from England, it is the most civilized. This may be accounted for, from the commercial habits brought over by the Flemings (which still continue) introducing the manners of other nations; an advantage denied to the generality of the Welch, whose ancient (perhaps wholesome) prejudices disinclined them to extensive commerce.

We took our final departure from Pembroke, on the road to Haverfordwest, not

 without

without often looking back on the princely relics of its castle, towering above the river: but, crossing a ridgy eminence, our attention was diverted by the appearance of MILFORD-HAVEN.

This noble harbour, immortalized by the strains of our great dramatic poet, is of an oblong figure; about ten miles in length, and from one to two in width. It is justly considered as the best and safest in Great Britain, and inferior to none in Europe; abounding with the best anchorage, and having five bays, ten creeks, and thirteen roads. Two forts that were erected in the time of Elizabeth on the opposite points of the entrance, called Nangle and Dale block-houses, are now neglected.

As a picturesque object, Milford-haven is chiefly interesting for its noble sheet of water; its peaceable shores, rising in gentle hills, may please from their flowing outline; but, uncloathed with wood, and unbroken into crags or precipices, their sameness fails to interest an eye habituated to bolder scenery. The mouth of the haven, turning suddenly southward, gives it from most points of view the appearance of a lake. It very strongly reminded

reminded me of several of the lakes in Cumberland; but, although its surface is greater, the lakes far transcend it in the accompanyments of rock and wood, and a sedgy margin that mixes its verdure with the water: whereas the haven is surrounded by a broad stripe of mud, except at high tide: this defect, however, is constituent to all estuaries and tide rivers. More richly decorative in their scenery are the three branches of Milford-haven, which diverge at the extremity of the great bason, and distribute fertility and beauty over the principal part of Pembrokeshire *. It was our intention to have crossed these branches at Lawrenny and Landshipping, and to have taken Picton castle and Slebatch in our way to Haverfordwest; but, not having a whole day before us, considering the time due to the several objects, and learning that the ferries were uncertain, we recollected our sufferings at Carew, and by taking the direct

* The shores of Milford-haven abound with lime-stone; which, affording a rich manure (with coals and culm), is conveyed by water over a great portion of the county. In the shores of the haven also, near its junction with the open sea, are many veins of copper ore, some of which are conjectured to be very rich; but none have been explored with perseverance.

road to Haverford avoided the risk of being again benighted *.

We were detained at the ferry near an hour; for the embarkation and passage of three carriages and their horses from the opposite side occupied all the boats during that time. But, although restless enough ourselves, we were not the most anxious part of a company that was waiting for a passage: several young men and near twenty young women, all dressed in their holiday-clothes, were panting for the amusements of Haverfordwest fair: perhaps a description of these lasses may convey some idea of Pembrokean beauty.

Health, contentment, and cheerfulness, combined, formed their predominant expression: yet it might be truly said, in the words of Gray,

"O'er their warm cheeks and rising bosoms move
"The bloom of young Desire, and purple light of Love."

A roundish oval circumscribed their faces; their eyes, not over large, of a dark blue,

* Lord Kensington described to me a very picturesque ruin called Benton castle, situated upon the borders of Milford-haven near the arm of Lawreuny. This ruin I had not an opportunity of seeing, nor do I remember having read of it in any of the descriptions of Wales.

unstrained

unstrained by the wakeful vigils of fashionable revelry, displayed all the native brilliancy of those interesting organs; their noses, though of the snub kind, were well formed; and pretty pouting lips were ever ready to distend into a smile, on which occasion rows of ivory appeared, such as could hardly be matched out of Pembrokeshire *. The tendency to *embonpoint*, so characteristic of the Welch woman, was by no means displeasing in these young and elastic subjects; whatever was lost in elegance, was compensated in another point of view; their necks, of the most luxuriant prominence,

"With youth wild-throbbing"—

were modestly handkerchiefed to their throats; yet did the thin gauze covering, closely embracing the proud distensions of nature, only the more bewitchingly manifest the beauties which it was appointed to conceal. Their other proportions were in unison, and, as a jockey, who was also going to the fair, coarsely,

* I asked one of these young women, with the utmost seriousness and civility, at least with all that I was master of, what they made use of to render their teeth so uncommonly white; when the arch hussy waggishly replied, "Only a "little nice white sand, and a scrubbing-brush, Sir."

but

but clearly, observed, "full of hard meat." In truth, among them, it were no difficult matter to find what Homer would call—θαλερὴν παρακοιτιν. The dress of the Welch women, however, is not calculated to set off their persons: a close mob cap has little grace, especially when surmounted with a round felt hat; and their very long waists, and brown or plaid cloth jackets and petticoats, but render the rotundity of their foundations more unpicturesque. It cannot at present be said, that

"——— their tender limbs
"Float in the loose simplicity of dress;"

yet, as the smart girls begin to imitate our English modes, in the course of a few years every contour of nature may be as free to public inspection in Wales, as it is at present in the polite circles of the metropolis.

Crossing the ferry, we left this interesting group; and, in proceeding up a high bank of the haven, enjoyed a fine view of its expansive surface, and grand undulating shores. About half-way to Haverfordwest a new scene burst upon us, consisting of a wide luxuriant valley, watered by a large arm of Milford-haven. We were denied a distinct view of this scene by a hazy atmosphere; but are informed,

formed, that it is uncommonly rich and extensive in clear weather. On approaching the town of Haverfordwest up a laborious ascent, we passed through the fair, which is held just without the town. Black cattle and horses were the chief objects of the meeting, which had scarcely any diversions; no shews; nor any jugglers, except a recruiting party, and two or three cattle jobbers, or middle men, who agreed upon the price of the market, while the actual buyers and sellers stood gaping at each other, in amazement how such prices could be obtained! Perhaps they had to learn, that for an *indispensable commodity,* exclusively held by a set of men whose interests are common, *any* price may be obtained! But we had some rural sports; a party of rustics were dancing on the green, to the notes of a miserable scraper; yet of him it could not be said,

"Old Orpheus play'd so well, he mov'd old Nick;
"But thou mov'st nothing but thy fiddle-stick;"

for the reeking brows of his company very plainly evinced the laborious agitation that he had excited. Close by, a game at see-saw seemed to create much diversion among the bye-standers. We joined in the throng, and were entertained

entertained with a good-natured dispute between a comely lad and as blythe a lass as any the fair could boast: they were in the midst of their acquaintance; and we learned from one of them, that on the following Sunday they were to be married: he wished her to ride with him at see-saw, and she persisted in refusing; he hauled her to no purpose, until a sharp-looking little girl said, that if she were in his place she would put off the wedding for a fortnight, to be revenged; a loud laugh succeeded this, at the expence of the bride-elect; but the allusion to matrimony forced no downcast confusion on the lass; perhaps her rosy dimples were painted with a deeper hue; yet the suffusion arose rather from a glowing idea, than a sensation of unnecessary shame: wherefore should she be ashamed of the approaching fulfilment of her long-cherished wishes?—I do not know whether she feared that her lover might adopt the advice of her mischievous friend, or whether it was the natural compliance of the sex disqualifying them for stout denial, that acted upon her; but she at length yielded. Alas, poor damsel! she was not yet an adept at see-saw; and a verification of Buxoma's

mischance

mischance was witnessed by the whole company:

"*Cuddy.*—Across the fallen oak the plank I laid,
"And myself pois'd against the tott'ring maid;
"High leap'd the plank, adown Buxoma fell:
"I spy'd—but faithful sweethearts never tell."

The town of HAVERFORDWEST irregularly built on the steep bank of the river HIA, may now be considered as the capital of Pembrokeshire; as well on account of its superior extent and opulence, as from its having lately become the place of the grand session. But the streets are narrow and dirty, and so steep as to be seriously dangerous. A few good houses, among which is a residence of the dowager lady Kensington, start up here and there; but in such situations, as to convey no look of importance to the place. However commerce may have diffused wealth through this town, and proclaimed it the successful rival of Pembroke; yet, compared with the clean, placid, and respectable mien of the latter, it ensures no pre-eminence of esteem from the tourist: it may, indeed, present to him the idea of a purse-proud shop-keeper, strutting before a decayed gentleman.

The

The castle, seated on a cliff adjoining the town, is said to have been built by Gilbert Earl of Clare, in the reign of King Stephen, and was occupied by the Flemings. Though still possessing considerable portions of its former importance, yet, engrafted with modern additions to fit it for the county jail, it has little picturesque attraction. A wall connected with the castle, which once surrounded the town, is still in part standing: a good quay, a custom house, a free school, a charity school, and an alms house, are among the public concerns of this town. Of three churches that it boasts, that of St. Mary is a neat building; and its spire, covered with shingles and warped from the perpendicular, has a curious effect. A short distance southward of the town, near the river, are some remains of a priory of Black canons, founded by John de Haverford.

An excursion of three or four miles led us to PICTON CASTLE, the noble seat of lord Milford, whose extensive domains cover a great part of the surrounding country. This may be considered as one of the most antique residences in the kingdom, having been built by

by William de Picton, a Norman knight, in the reign of William Rufus. Upon his line's becoming extinct, it descended to the Wogans, then to the Dones, and afterwards to the Philipses of Kylsant; and during the Civil Wars, Sir Richard Philips made a long and vigorous defence in it for King Charles. It is one of the very few castles that escaped the dilapidations of Cromwell, and is also remarkable for having been always inhabited; yet the alterations and additions of successive occupiers have not deprived it of its embattled figure. The extensive and delightful plantations of this seat unite with those of Slebatch, a handsome house built by the late Mr. Barlow, and now in the possession of Mr. Philips.

In another excursion from Haverfordwest, passing Johnston, an old seat of Lord Kensington's, to the obliging communications of which nobleman I feel myself greatly indebted, we reached HUBBERSTON HAIKIN, a fishing town in Milford-haven, whence the Waterford packets depart from Britain. This is a poor place, and ill-supplied with accommodation for travellers; but at the still smaller

town

town of MILFORD, on the opposite side of the river, we were informed, a good inn is established. Near Habberston are the small remains of a priory, consisting chiefly of the gate-house; but of what foundation or order no legend informs us.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

JOURNEY OVER THE PRECELLY MOUNTAIN TO CARDIGAN—EXTENSIVE PROSPECT—CARDIGAN — ST. DOGMAEL'S PRIORY—ANOTHER ROUTE FROM HAVERFORDWEST TO CARDIGAN, BY ST. DAVID'S—THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. DAVID'S—GRAND RUINS OF ITS PALACE—A LOGGAN, OR ROCKING STONE—RAMSAY ISLAND—FISHGUARD—NEWPORT — KILGARRAN CASTLE — SALMON LEAP—NEWCASTLE.

THE choice of our journey from Haverfordwest * to Cardigan was a matter of some difficulty; we were desirous of traversing the Precelly

* From Haverfordwest, a turnpike road extends to Caermarthen, 33 miles distant. About nine miles from Haverford, and one to the left of the road, is Lawhaden castle, picturesquely seated on a bold eminence, overlooking an extensive country. This castle was the principal seat of the Bishops

 of

Precelly Mountain, but could not think of leaving the ruins of St. David's unexamined. At last we hit upon the expedient of each taking a different road: my companion, having the better horse, took the circuitous route by St. David's; and I, the direct road over the mountains.

Proceeding upon this arrangement two or three miles, I halted to take a retrospective view of the country. Haverfordwest now wore a singular appearance, with its houses piled on each other; but, accompanied by a fine river well furnished with vessels, and by its bridge and massive castle, it presented an agreeable picture. At some distance westward, the lofty tower of Roche castle was conspicuous; and partly in the same direction, the Trogan rocks, rising from the verdure in abrupt crags, so as to be generally mistaken for stupendous ruins. Turning to the east, within a short distance appeared an

of St. David's; but in the year 1616 Bishop Milborne obtained leave to dismantle it, the lead and other expensive materials having been purloined by his holy predecessors. Narbeth, a small irregular town built on a hill about 11 miles on the road, has some inconsiderable ruins of a castle erected by Sir Andrew Perrot, whose ancestor came over at the Conquest. The road, passing through St. Clare, a pleasing village, continues onward without any particular attraction.

ancient

ancient encampment called ST. LEONARD'S RATHE, crowning a bold eminence; this work is circular, and, from the height of its vallum and depth of its ditch, may be attributed to the Saxons.

As I advanced from this spot I parted with the beauties of the country: no objects of interest occurred; the unadorned views became compressed in narrow limits, until at length they were shut up in mountainous hollows. In this dreary track stands a poor solitary house called New inn, half way between Haverford and Cardigan: however, I here obtained part of a goose for my dinner, and then proceeded up the PRECELLY MOUNTAIN.

This mountain, reckoned the highest in South Wales, is part of a great ridge crossing Pembrokeshire in a direction East and West. On gaining the summit, a prodigious extent of prospect burst upon me. In front, a wild hilly tract, yet not undiversified with patches of cultivation, stretched nearly to the northern confines of South Wales, where the pale summit of Plinlimmon, in Montgomeryshire, might be just distinguished from the atmospheric blue: more westward, beyond a vast expanse

of sea, like a doubtful mist rising from it, appeared Bardsey island, and the neighbouring shores in Caernarvonshire; and looking across the miserable country about Fishguard and St. David's, my guide assured me, that "on a very clear day a very good eye might "discover the mountains of Ireland;" but, I confess, it was not my good fortune to discover any such appearance. On looking backward, the whole of the interesting country that I had travelled in the neighbourhood of Milford-haven appeared in one comprehensive though distant display. From dwelling a considerable time on these extensive scenes, I traversed an uninteresting country made up of lumpy hills, and left Pembrokeshire in crossing the handsome old bridge of Cardigan.

CARDIGAN (in Welch chronicles Abertivy*) is a neat respectable town, though many of its streets are narrow and steep, seated on the north bank of the river Tivy, near its junction with the sea: the river is navigable for ships of small burthen up to the quay, which enables the inhabitants to carry on a pretty

* Aber, in Welch, signifies the mouth of a river: hence Abertivy, Aberystwith, &c.

brisk

brisk trade with Ireland. This town, though small, is governed by a mayor, thirteen aldermen, and as many common councilmen. The ruins of its castle, appearing on a low cliff at the foot of the bridge, are very inconsiderable, scarcely showing more than the fragments of two circular bastions overgrown with ivy; yet it was once a large and important fortress. Its foundation is ascribed to Gilbert de Clare, about the year 1160; but it was soon after taken, and in part destroyed, by Rhys ap Gryffith *.

Here are also the remains of a priory of Black monks, which was dedicated to St. Mary, and was subordinate to the abbey of Chertsey in Surrey.

Near Cardigan, in the year 1136, the English army, commanded by Ranolph earl

* Powell, in his History of Wales, says, that it was rebuilt before the year 1176; when Rhys, Prince of South Wales, made therein a great entertainment at Christmas, at which were present many hundreds of the English, Norman, and Irish nobility. Among other things for their entertainment, he caused all the bards throughout Wales to come thither; and seating them round the hall, they had to contend with each other in rhyme: such as excelled, were promised great rewards and rich presents. The North Wales bards were acknowledged victors in poetry, and Prince Rhys's own servants the ablest musicians.

of Chester, was shamefully worsted, and the two barons Robert Fitz Roger and Pain Fitz John, with 3000 others, slain on the spot, besides a great number drowned by the fall of a bridge. In this battle the English soldiers appeared to be planet-struck, surrendering themselves prisoners to mere old women; and the general with a few men made their escape not without great difficulty.

Early in the morning after my reaching Cardigan, I made an excursion in search of ST. DOGMAEL'S PRIORY, about a mile and a half distant. This fragment of antiquity is very much dilapidated, and boasts scarcely any picturesque appearance; the few parts standing are converted into barns, sheds, and habitations; but enough remains to shew the original extent of the church; which was cruciform, of no considerable dimensions, and of the early Gothic style; in the cemetery adjoining the ruin, and the village church,

——" a church-yard yew,
" Decay'd and worn with age,"

has a pleasing characteristic effect: and here the scene, finely interspersed with wood, and overlooking the Tivy, is undoubtedly picturesque. This priory was founded for Benedictine

J. T. Barber delin.

W. Pickett sculp

St. Donnael's Priory.

dictine monks by Martin de Turribus, a Norman chieftain, who first conquered the surrounding territory called Kames or Kemish, and deluged it with the blood of its natives. This was a common trick for cheating the devil, practised by the organized plunderers of that day. After pillaging a country, and enslaving or massacreing the legitimate proprietors, they hoped to expiate their crime, and quell the rising qualms of conscience, by appropriating a part of their booty to a monkish foundation—to a set of idle jugglers, scarcely less inimical to the rights of society, though less ferocious, than themselves.

Returning to the inn, I rejoined my fellow-tourist, who had just completed his circuit of between forty and fifty miles round the coast: of this route I learn the following particulars:

From Haverfordwest the road passes near the elevated ruin of Roche castle; thence extends through a wild dreary country, near St. Bride's dangerous bay, and crosses the romantic creek of Solva to the once flourishing city of ST. DAVID'S, now in appearance an inconsiderable village. This deserted place

occupies a gentle eminence on that projecting rocky cape called St. David's head. In a sheltered hollow beneath the town, are the noble ruins of the Metropolitan episcopacy of Wales; yet the CATHEDRAL OF ST. DAVID'S, though long a mouldering pile, having lately undergone a thorough repair, with a just attention to the antique style of architecture, now appears in renewed magnificence. This venerable structure is cruciform, of large dimensions, and of the early Gothic architecture, though not without much of the high-wrought fret-work additions of later ages. The nave alone wears all the simplicity of its original construction; the tower, highly ornamented, rises from the middle of the church to the height of 127 feet; Bishop Vaughan's chapel behind the choir, and the dilapidated one of St. Mary's, exhibit all the elegant tracery of the ornamented Gothic; as does also the chapter-house, and St. Mary's hall, now a ruin. Among the numerous ancient monuments that are to be met with in the church and its chapels, those of Owen Tudor, and Edward Earl of Richmond, father of Henry the VIIth, both situated near the middle of the choir, are worthy of notice.

The

The episcopal palace is a superb ruin, surmounted with a light parapet raised upon arches, in the style of Swansea castle and Lamphey court. "The area of the great court is "120 feet square; on the east side of which "is the Bishop's hall, 58 feet in length, and "23 in breadth; the King's hall, on the "south side, is 88 feet by 80. This grand "saloon is said to have been built expressly "for the reception of King John, on his re-"turn from Ireland in 1211." But we are informed by Godwin, that the palace itself was not erected until about the year 1335; which must be an anachronism, unless the story of King John be unfounded. The first hall is a grand room; but the latter has been particularly splendid. Over the fine arched entrance are the statues of King John and his queen; and at the east end is a curious circular window with bars diverging from the centre, still in a perfect condition. The chapel containing the remains of a font, and kitchen amply furnished with four chimneys, are also entire: nor are the forsaken apartments deficient in proofs of the regal splendor assumed by the Romish pastors of Christian humility.

Many

Many ruinous buildings, once habitations of ecclesiastical functionaries, surround the cathedral; yet sufficient are kept in repair for the diminished number of officers now appointed: the cathedral service is, nevertheless, performed with an attention that would do credit to more eminent establishments. The whole of these buildings are inclosed by a wall eleven hundred yards in circumference.

St. David's is supposed to have been a Roman station, the Octapitarum of Ptolemy; and here St. Patrick is said to have founded a monastery to the honour of St. Andrew in the year 470: to this place St. David translated the archbishopric of Wales, from Caerleon, about the year 577, and founded the cathedral, which was afterwards dedicated to him; but the primacy was withdrawn, and annexed to that of Canterbury, in the reign of Henry the First. Here also a college was founded for a master and seven priests by John Duke of Lancaster, in conjunction with his wife and the Bishop of the diocese, in the year 1369.

At the extremity of St. David's promontory is a disjointed craig; so large, that it is supposed a hundred oxen could not drag it away; but

but so placed on smaller stones, as to have been easily rocked by the pressure of a man's hand *.

In druidical ages, this formed the grand ordeal: if a man was to appear guilty, the priests managed that he should apply his pressure near the axis, and the stone remained immoveable; but if his peace or priest offerings were deemed commensurate to his sins, he was instructed to lean near the extremity, and it easily gave way. Near this head-land is Ramsay island, a fruitful little spot, and once particularly so in holiness, if we may credit ancient histories, which state that no less than twenty thousand saints lie interred in it. The dangerous rocks called the Bishop and his Clerks, near this island, are covered with wild fowl in the breeding season.

The road continues on a barren tempestuous waste to Fishguard, a miserable fishing town, only remarkable for the late descent of 1400 French invaders, who, after a few days possession of the neighbourhood, surrendered to the Welch peasantry, headed by Lord Cawdor. Newport, a few miles farther, is

* The equilibrium is now destroyed.

another

another poor fishing town, at the bottom of a small bay: the ruined castle, seated on a hill above the town, was built by the Anglo-norman settlers in 1215, but afterwards nearly destroyed by Llewellyn. In Nevern church-yard, near Newport, is the shaft of a stone cross about thirteen feet high, curiously carved all over with scrolls and knots. At Pentere Evau, in Nevern parish, is a circle of rude stones, 150 feet in circumference; in the midst whereof is a cromlech * of great dimensions: in the same parish is another altar monument, called Llech-y-drybedh, having a furrow in the flat stone, which might be to carry off the blood of the victims. In Grose's Antiquities, five stone altars are stated to be in this neighbourhood, and also four barrows; one of which, on being opened, was found to contain five urns full of burnt bones. Nothing worthy of particular notice occurs from this spot to Cardigan.

We projected an aquatic excursion, to explore the scenery of the Tivy; but, the tide not answering, we were obliged to desert the river for two or three miles, and proceed by

* See p. 29.

land

J. Barber delin

J. Black sculp.

Kilgarran Castle

land to Kilgarran. The Tivy above Cardigan becomes environed by high hills, whose approaching bases contract the bed of the river, changing its character from a broad and majestic, to an impetuous eddying stream: the sides of these hills rise from the water in almost perpendicular steepness, yet clothed with trees from the river's brink to their ridgy summits. In the midst of this imbowered glen, a naked rock, crowned with the truly picturesque remains of Kilgarran castle, proudly advances, and forms a striking contrast to the dark rich verdure that prevails in the other accompanyments of the river.

The position of Kilgarran castle is nearly on all sides self-defended; but on the isthmus that connects the projecting rock with the main land, two ponderous round towers seem to have formerly defied the assault of war, as they now do that of pilfering dilapidation. The broken walls, watch-towers, and apartments that compose the minor parts of the fortress, bespeak it to have been of no great original extent, or highly ornamented; yet the scattered relics, variously interwoven with ivy, offer an appearance from most points of view highly imposing and grand.

The

The foundation of the castle is uncertain, and the styles of different ages appear throughout the building. According to Carradoc, this fortress was erected about the year 1222, when Marshall Earl of Striquil (Chepstow) vanquished the Welch under their Prince Gruffydth, and gained an undisputed footing in these parts. The town of Kilgarran is diminished into one street, thinly inhabited by labouring farmers and fishermen.

In a romantic hollow, a mile or two higher up, the Tivy, throwing itself over a ledge of rock in one bold sheet, though not more than six feet in depth, forms a salmon leap generally esteemed the most remarkable in Wales. The salmon, in its course up the river, meeting with the fall, coils itself into a circle, and by a sudden distension springs up the precipice, and cleaves the torrent with astonishing vigour *; yet it is frequently baffled, and greatly amuses the spectator with its repeated attempts to overleap the cataract. We were not entertained with this display of strength and agility on our visit, but were much interested by the curious means em-

* Camden says, it often holds its tail between its teeth, to render its spring more immediate.

ployed

ployed in catching the fish. The fisherman is seated in a sort of canoe, called a coracle, formed of open basket-work of thin laths, covered with a horse's hide, or a well-pitched piece of sail-cloth: the vessel is of a figure nearly oval, about four feet and a half long and three wide, yet so light as to be carried with ease on the man's shoulder from his home to the river: in this he whirls among the eddies of the river; with a paddle in one hand, he alters or accelerates his course with surprizing dexterity; while with the other he manages the net, the line being held between his teeth. In this way the fishing in most of the rivers of Wales is pursued. Coracles have been peculiar to British rivers from time immemorial. Lucan very clearly describes them; and in latter times, Sir Walter Raleigh relates, that "the Britons had boats "made of willow twigs covered on the out-"side with hides."

Near the water-fall is a manufacture of iron and tinned plates, belonging to Sir Benjamin Hammet. Two or three miles higher up the river is NEWCASTLE, a small irregular town situated upon its banks, and graced with the venerable ruins of a castle, but of no great

antiquity. Thence a road of twenty miles extends through a dreary uninteresting country to Caermarthen.

A more romantic and sequestered path than is traced beside "the hollow stream "that roars between the hills" from Lechryd bridge to Llangoedmor on the north margin of the river, can scarcely be imagined; continuing upwards of two miles, beneath the umbrage of its high and well-wooded banks, and commanding delightful landscapes of the sombre kind at every turn. In the parish of Llangoedmor, we learned, there were several monuments of the druidical ages: one is a remarkably large cromlech; the flat stone being eight or nine yards in circumference, with one edge resting on the ground: there is a smaller monument of the same kind near it; also a circle of rude stones about twelve yards round; and five beds of loose stones, each about six feet over. Llechly gowress (the stone of a giantess) in the parish of Neuodh, also near Cardigan, is another very large cromlech; and near it is a parcel of large hewn stones nineteen in number; which, it is said by the vulgar, cannot be counted.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

LLANARTH — ABERAERON — LLANSANFRIED — LLANRHYSTID — AN ENQUIRY INTO A STRANGE ASSERTED CUSTOM RELATING TO THE MODE OF COURTSHIP IN WALES — LLANBADARNVAWR — ABERISTWYTH, AND ITS CASTLE.

WE left Cardigan on the road to Aberistwyth, and soon entered upon the same dreary kind of country that we noticed in the north and north-west of Pembrokeshire. At the poor village of Blaneporth, on the left of the road, is a large circular area encompassed by a moat, which is most probably the remains of a British fortification. Castel-Yndalig, a mile or two further, is a similar work, but much larger and less distinct.

Thence we began to ascend a tract of lofty hills (leaving Penrhyn church on our left near the sea-shore *), and, gaining a considerable eminence, enjoyed an uninterrupted view over the whole sweep of Cardigan's extensive bay. This bay, from its southern limit, Strumblehead near Fishguard, stretching northward, extends a vast gulph into North Wales, and is at length terminated by Bardsey island in Caernarvonshire: it often proves a shelter to ships in the Irish trade, and contains several good harbours. The effect of this extensive display from the great elevations that we traversed was extremely striking; stretching from beneath us to a remote horizon, exhibited a silvery surface of immense magnitude; while the shores presented an endless variety of bold advancing promontories, overhanging cliffs, and high swelling mountains wild and desolate; yet

* Near Penrhyn a British gold coin was found, of about equal weight with a guinea, a little hollowed on one side, and different from any of the coinage of the Romans, or their successors: whence, and from other instances, it is inferred, that the Britons had gold and silver coin before the arrival of the Romans. In the church-yard is a large rough-hewn stone, bearing an inscription that has not yet been interpreted.

here

here and there a stripe of green meadow appeared on a favoured slope, and a few woody plantations disclosed themselves through picturesque hollows. In the distant boundary of Caernarvonshire, the projecting and receding hills about Pulhelly bay were conspicuous; opposed to these, the superior magnitude of Cader-Idris arrested the attention, towering among the craggy summits of the Merionethshire mountains. From the bay our view roamed over a dreary uninteresting tract of country, to a ridge of mountains, whose broken outline mixing with the clouds defined the entrance of North-Wales; where, proudly rising above competition, the confederated mountains, forming the pile of "Mighty Plinlimmon," appear in all their majesty.

The consideration of these distant objects, and the attention demanded by a stumbling horse, were my chief employments from Cardigan to Aberistwyth: yet the general tediousness of our ride, upon a rocky track here called a turnpike, had some relief as we passed through LLANARTH, a *market-town*, consisting of half a dozen huts seated in a romantic hollow; and ABERAERON, about

four miles further, a neat village near the sea-shore, pleasingly situated at the entrance of an abrupt well-wooded valley. Near its picturesque bridge there is a more comfortable inn than might be expected in so retired a situation; and, as it afterwards appeared, the only tolerable one between Cardigan and Aberistwyth. From this place the road, bordering the sea-shore, became more level; and we soon came within view of the fragments of a castle on the beach, the greater part of which appears to have been washed away by the action of the sea. This fort was probably erected by the Normans to cover their landing or retreat, when, in the reign of William Rufus, they fitted out a fleet, and, descending on the coast of Cardiganshire, conquered or ravaged the maritime country to a considerable distance. Most of the principal towns then fell into their hands, upon which they affected the government; but, as a measure of no less necessity than policy, assigned their power to Kadugan ap Bledin, a British chief of high authority, who strictly adhered to their interest. His son Owen however, rashly attacking the Normans and Flemings who had lately settled in the neighbouring

bouring territory southward, was, with his father, obliged to fly into Ireland. Henry the First then entrusted the country to Gilbert Clare, who raised many fortifications within the district. Kadugan and his son Owen were nevertheless soon after restored to their lands; but the son, committing fresh incursions, was slain by Gerald of Pembroke, whose wife Nestra he had carried away. Old Kadugan became a prisoner in England for a length of time, but was in the end restored to his estates; when he was suddenly stabbed by his nephew Madok. Henry the Second afterwards gave this tract of country to Roger de Clare; whose son Richard earl of Clare being slain in a contest with the Welch, Rhys, prince of South-Wales, attacked and vanquished the Anglo-Normans with great slaughter, and reduced them under his dominion. But by degrees Cardigan returned to the hands of the English until the final conquest of the country by Edward the First.

We soon after passed through the dreary village of LLANSANSFRIED, where a monastery is conjectured to have existed; and about two miles further entered LLAN-

parted warrior. We soon after descended into the abrupt vale of Ystwith, and crossed its river over a picturesque bridge, venerably mantled with ivy *. Our route continued over the high ridgy hills that divide the parallel vales of Ystwith and Rhydol, the latter of which presented an agreeable contrast to the dreary country through which we had travelled from within a few miles of Haverfordwest.—Here, among extensive meadows of the richest verdure, the meandering Rhydol wantons its fantastic course. On a gentle eminence near its banks, in the midst of the valley, appears the embowered town of LLANBADARN-VAWR, a picturesque though deserted spot, yet once a Roman city, and afterwards the seat of an Episcopacy and Monastery established by St. Paternus in the beginning of the sixth century. The church is yet a handsome building. Between this town and the sea-coast is a small ancient fortification, consisting of a square area surrounded by a wall with a tower at one of the

* At Lhanar, a small village two or three miles distant, on the right bank of the river, there was a Cistercian nunnery, a cell to Starflower Abbey, of which I understand some imperfect vestiges remain.

angles.

angles. A range of wild hills, backed by the stupendous Plinlimmon, forms the opposite boundary of this valley; and at its termination in the sea-coast, the town of Aberistwyth appears in a very picturesque light on the brink of the sea, with its ruined castle on a gentle rise to the left.

ABERISTWYTH is a less agreeable town on entering it, than as a distant object. Most of the streets are narrow and ill-paved; and the stone used being of a black colour, gives the whole rather a dirty appearance; but this remark is not applicable to some houses that have lately sprung up for the genteel company which resorts to it in the bathing-season. Nor must I mention the bathing at Aberistwyth, without observing, that it is conducted with more propriety than at any other watering-place that I have seen in England or Wales. The ladies' and gentlemen's machines are placed nearly a quarter of a mile asunder; and the indecency of promiscuous dipping, so disgusting at more fashionable resorts, is in consequence avoided: the bathing too is excellent, with a good sandy bottom at all hours of the tide.

The

CHAP. VIII.

BARRIER OF NORTH AND SOUTH WALES — THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE — GRAND CATARACT OF THE MYNACH — CWM YSTWITH HILLS — HAFOD — ANCIENT ENCAMPMENTS — STARFLOWER ABBEY — TREGARRON — ROMAN ANTIQUITIES AT LLANDEWI BREVI — LAMPETER — LLANSAWEL EDWIN'S FORD — LLANDILO.

WE were detained at Aberistwyth by the continuance of a violent rain which had deluged the neighbourhood for several days. At length a cessation of the storm allowed us to resume our journey, though not to perform a projected excursion to the summit of Plinlimmon, which is only free from clouds in very fair weather. Returning up the hilly confines of the valley, we again admired the meandering Rhydol, and its gentle accompanyment; but following its course, as we advanced

J. T. Barber delin. J. Jeakes sculp

The Devil's bridge.

advanced through a wild romantic district, the character of the valley soon changed; dark wooded hills, aspiring to the dignity of mountains, advanced their shagged sides toward the stream, and, gradually closing to an impervious glen, shut up the river in their recess. Beyond these hills rose the broken line of mountains forming the termination of South Wales, where mighty Plinlimmon, lord of the boundary, raised his stupendous head in majestic desolation, though half concealed by eddying clouds: the whole scene exhibited unfettered nature in her wildest mood. A pouring rain that now fell over us circumscribed our desert prospects, while we proceeded over uncultivated hills, with scarcely a token of society, to the DEVIL'S BRIDGE.

The cataract that is here formed by the falls of the Mynach saluted us with its thundering roar, long ere we approached it; but, as we drew near, the strong verberation, rebellowed by surrounding cavernous rocks, seemed to convulse the atmosphere! We hastily put up our horses at the Hafod arms, a solitary inn; and in a few paces found ourselves on the bridge, suspended over a gulph

at

at which even recollection shudders. This bridge bestrides a lane of almost perpendicular rocks, patched with wood, whose summits are here scarcely five yards asunder. At a terrific depth in the glen rages unseen the impetuous Mynach, engulphed beneath protruding craigs and pendant foliage: but on looking over the parapet, the half-recoiling sight discovers the phrenzied torrent, in one volume of foam, bursting into light, and threatening, as it breaks against the opposing rocks, to tear the mountains from their strong foundations; then, instantly darting into the black abyss beneath, it leaves the imagination free to all the terrors of concealed danger. With emotions of awe, nor without those of fear, we climbed down the side of the rock assisted by steps that were cut in it, and with some peril reached the level of the darkened torrent; where, standing on a projecting craig against which the river bounded, immersed in its spray and deafened by its roar, we involuntarily clung to the rock. The impression of terror subsiding, left us at liberty to examine the features of the scene. Nearly over our heads appeared the bridge attributed to the handy-works of the Devil; but

but a less cunning workman might have thrown an arch across a fissure of a few feet span; and indeed the native mason who, about 50 years since, built the bridge now used, standing perpendicularly over the old one, has constructed the best arch of the two. The original bridge was built by the Monks of Starflower Abbey near 700 years since. Nor is the singular appearance of these arches devoid of picturesque effect; being tastefully besprinkled with verdure, and relieved by the intervention of numerous branchy trees: while the naked black opposing cliffs, worn out into curious hollows by the torrents, exhibit as bold a rocky chasm as ever was traced by the pencil of Salvator.

On climbing from this hollow, we proceeded two or three hundred yards to the left of the bridge, and again descended a fearful track, to witness the grand FALLS OF THE MYNACH. Under the direction of a guide, we reached the ordinary station with little difficulty, where the view of the cataract disclosed itself with considerable effect, in four separate cascades; though, from the great fall's being divided by the intervention of a projecting rock, they appeared too much alike: the

eye, accustomed to picturesque disposition, in vain sought to fix itself on a pre-eminent feature. I wished to get lower, but it seemed impracticable: emboldened, however, by the example of our guide, I clambered upon the edge of an immense perpendicular strata of rock, to nearly the lower channel of the torrent; when the cataract appeared in the most perfect disposition imaginable: the great fall displayed itself in uninterrupted superiority, and the lesser ones retired as subordinate parts. The perpendicular descent of this cataract is not less than two hundred and ten feet; the first fall is not more than twenty feet; the next increases to sixty; the third diminishes to about twenty; then, after a momentary pause, the torrent bounds over a shelving rock in one tremendous fall of one hundred and ten feet, and soon unites with the Rhydol, here a similar mountain torrent.

This grand cataract receives no inconsiderable augmentation of terrific appearance from the black stratified rocks forming the glen down which it thunders; nor can the beholder, however firm his mind, divest himself of terror, while, near the bottom of an abyss for ever denied a ray of sun, he views

J.T.Barber delin.

J.Leakes sculp

Falls of the Mynach.

views the menacing torrent bursting before him; or contemplates its foaming course tearing at his feet among craigs that its fury has disjoined. If he ventures to look up the acclivitous rock, more real danger threatens his return, when a devious balance or false step would ensure his certain destruction. Yet from the horrors of this gloomy chasm some favoured projections relieve the imagination, ornamented by the light and tasteful penciling of the mountain ash, intermixed with vigorous sapling oaks; while here and there a tree of riper years, unable to derive support from the scanty soil, falls in premature decay a prostrate ruin.—I have seen water-falls more picturesquely grand than the cataract of the Mynach, but none more awfully so, not even excepting the celebrated falls of Lowdore and Scaleforce in Cumberland.

Climbing from this scene of terrors, I rejoined my companion, and at the Hafod Arms obtained a change of clothes; a comfort which, although wet to the skin for several hours, I should still longer have denied myself, had not the approach of night forced me from the Mynach's interesting scenery. Our active hostess quickly pro-

vided a tolerable dinner of mutton chops; and, cheered by a good peat-fire and a bottle of wine, we listened to the torrent's roar without dismay. On the following morning we did not neglect to revisit the romantic glen. The weather was fine; and, the effect of the late rains having subsided, the bulk of the torrent had much diminished; yet did the scene gain in beauty what it lost in terrific grandeur; for the intermingling foliage, darting from opposite sides of the glen, and reflecting various tints and degrees of light, softened the asperitous black rocks, and spread a lively net-work over the gloom.

Upon our preparing for the renewal of our journey, a material difficulty occurred; my poney was so completely knocked up, that he had not, as the jockeys phrase it, "a leg "to stand on." The alternative in this case was to buy another; and upon enquiry I found that my landlord had one to dispose of, which was forthwith produced. This was a good-sized poney, with plenty of bone, but ill-made; he had, however, an excellent character: his knees too were sadly broken; but a circumstantial tale shewed that to be the effect of accident, and not habitual awkward-

awkwardness: upon the whole, he did not seem dear at the price demanded, which was only five guineas: a bargain was therefore struck, the saddle transferred from the invalid to the back of my new purchase; and after given directions for the return of the former, which by the way incurred an expence more than his value, we set forward for the celebrated grounds of Hafod, about two miles distant.

Our road lay on the steep bank of the Mynach, commanding a full view of the glen, and its romantic bridge. Then ascending the Cwm Ystwith hill, through a current of clouds, we gained from its summit an uninterrupted view of the whole range of North Walean mountains, stretching from the English counties to the great bay of Cardigan: the intervening hollows were concealed by fields of mist; so that the uncultivated heights exhibited a scene as rugged as when

> "——————— Nature first made man,
> "Ere the base laws of servitude began,
> "And wild in woods the noble savage ran."

We now took a farewel view of the Mynach's glen, and quitted its interesting scenery with such sensations as one feels in

losing a friend whose intercourse has afforded both pleasure and improvement. We then descended to the vale of Ystwith, but unenlivened by its scenery, for a morning mist floated through the valley and spread a veil over its charms. A handsome park gate announced the entrance of HAFOD, and the thundering of an unseen waterfall formed a grand symphony to the spectacle that we were soon to witness.—Almost immediately the cloud of mist disappeared, rising like a huge curtain before us, and discovered such an assemblage of beauties, of cheerful walks and silent glens, of woody precipices, shadowy glades, garden thickets and waterfalls, that, considered with the barren wilds of the surrounding country, it seemed a second Paradise rising from a newly-subsided chaos. This charming place, occupying a deep narrow valley, watered by the Ystwith, is the creation of Col. Johnes, whose persevering genius has forced a mantle of wood upon rocky precipices where nature seemed to deny the access of verdure, and who in his elegant and useful projects of further improvement gives employment to the country around. Upon a spot judiciously chosen, where

where the banks of the valley gently incline, and the coverture of lofty woods afford a shelter from the north-eastern winds, stands the mansion, with a sloping lawn in front, commanding a comprehensive view of the enchanting valley; which if Dryden could but see, he would wish to recall the line,

"God never made his works for man to mend."

On putting ourselves under the direction of the gardener, we were first led to the kitchen-garden, furnished with extensive forcing-houses, and replete with every necessary appendage. The flower-garden also displayed its appropriate charms; but from these atchievements of art we turned, without regret, to where the bold hand of nature reared the scene in stupendous majesty;

"There along the dale,
"With woods o'erhung, and shagg'd with mossy rocks,
"Where on each hand the gushing waters play,
"And down the rough cascade white dashing fall,"

we passed, enamoured with the incessant though congenial variety of our subject. After visiting the cold bath, a small sequestered building, a mazy walk romantically traced by the side of a brawling torrent, and amidst

 tangled

tangled shrubberies, led to a small cascade; and soon after a superior waterfall engaged our attention, where the whole volume of the Ystwith burst over a ledge of rocks in a composition truly grand and picturesque. But a scene of awful sublimity disclosed itself on exploring a dark cavernous passage in a rock and reaching its extremity, where a lofty cascade of transcendent beauty, throwing itself over a strata of black rocks, bounded close to the opening of the cave, and shrouded the aperture with its spray, as it became engulphed in a dark chasm beneath.

The towering mountains clothed with myriads of oaks, which environ this remarkable valley, afford a diversity of walks and combinations of view, to describe which words would be inadequate, and prove at best but tedious. A walk of twelve miles scarcely comprises a complete survey of the grounds, as we are told; but, being pressed for time, our perambulation was confined to a much smaller space; yet enough was seen to convince us that this is one of the most delightful rural retreats in the kingdom.

The mansion is a handsome modern edifice; in the Gothic style of architecture; which

which idea is perfectly consonant with the romantic cast of the scenery; and the general outline of the building is certainly pleasing: but we were sorry that Col. Johnes had not been better advised in the execution of this design, which though we had read of, in one place, as built "in the *most correct taste*," and in another as "a mansion in the *Italian* style," we found to be a heterogeneous jumble; wherein a bastard sort of Greek and Saxon architecture was blended with the prevailing Gothic. The house internally we understood to be richly fitted up, and furnished with an excellent library, but did not visit it; for, though the *demand* of five shillings for the gardener's attendance was willingly paid, yet the same sum, which we found would be required by the housekeeper, appeared to us more than the show of any *Welch house* was worth.

There always appears to me something very unworthy in great men allowing their servants to exact the sums that they do from the spectators of their grandeur; but, such emoluments are taken into the account of a servant's hire, and in some measure contribute to the support of the great man's establishment:

tablishment: as far as they do this, they indirectly form part of his revenue; and in that view I consider the *Grandee* as somewhat of a mercenary showman, however *magnifique*.

A ride of nearly a mile extent, among delightful plantations, led us out of Hafod; when, crossing the Ystwith over a good stone bridge, we soon passed through a little romantic village on the road to Tregarron, from whence the country continued wild, without grandeur or interest, a succession of

"Barren heaths, and rushy meets,"

until the approach to Llandilo. In this midland route the hills were much less continuous than round the coast, and the valleys frequently extensive; but, overrun with peat-bogs, they neither displayed fertility nor beauty. About half way to Tregarron, a few hundred yards to the right of the road, were two considerable hills, each crowned with a large ancient encampment: we did not stop to examine them, but quickly turned off the road, over moorlands on our left, in search of the remains of STARFLOWER or STRATA FLORIDA ABBEY. We had no track to direct us; nor did

did a human creature appear for many miles: after a fruitless wandering, therefore, we gave up the object, with this consolation, that almost the only relic remaining is an ornamented circularly-arched gateway. Yet was this place, now lost in a trackless desert, once of high importance. Strata Florida Abbey (in British, Munachlog Ystrad flur) was founded anno 1164 for Cistertian Monks* by Rhesus Prince of South-Wales. In it many of the Welch Princes were buried, and their acts kept and recorded: it suffered considerably when Edward the First overran Wales, but was soon after repaired.

A sloppy ride brought us to TREGARRON; a poor straggling ill-built town, situated in an abrupt hollow watered by an arm of the Tivy; yet, plentifully interspersed with trees, it forms a pleasing relief to the surrounding dreariness. Its church is a respectable old building, and it boasts the dignity of a mayor. Our inn here afforded us a capacious dish of eggs and bacon for dinner; but, though it was not more than ordinarily strong and greasy for the wilds of Wales, we grew delicate, and,

* According to Tanner, Leland, and Dugdale. Camden says it was for Cluniacs.

leaving

leaving our meal almost untasted, pursued our journey on the turnpike road to Lampeter. About three miles from Tregarron, immediately on the left of the road, we observed a large mound encircled by a moat; but could not determine whether it was the site of an antient citadel, or monumental of a deceased chieftain. In the same neighbourhood is the church of Landewi-Brevi, where in 522, at a Holy Synod, St. David opposed the opinions of the Pelagians. A prodigious petrified horn which is shewn at the church is said to have remained there from that time; and in the year 1187 Bishop Beck founded a college on the spot. Several Roman inscribed stones appear in and about the church; but at a place some distance southward of it, called Kaer Kestilh (the field of the castles), a great number have at various times been discovered, as also coins and Roman bricks. Dr. Gibson considers this to be the Lovantinum of Ptolemy, in which opinion he is followed by Mr. Horsley: Yet is this spot, the site of a Roman town, and once occupied by its legions, now with difficulty traced among barren fields remote from habitation;

"No

" No busy steps the grass-grown foot-way tread,
" But all the bloomy flush of life is fled."

From a fatiguing day's journey we gladly reposed at a better inn than might be expected in so poor a town as LAMPETER; and the following morning sallied forth to visit a large old seat of Sir Robert Lloyd's; which, we learned, " exhibited a striking appearance " with its four great towers crowned with " domes in the midst of well-planted inclosures, " but now scarcely inhabited." A thick mist denied us this view; so, crossing the long old bridge of Lampeter, we entered Caermarthenshire on our way to Llandilo. Nothing can be imagined more dreary than the first half of this ride; lying over an extensive range of lumpy hills, as remote from any thing picturesque as profitable. No tree, not a bush could be seen; and as we mournfully looked round, where, except the miserable road on which we travelled, no trace of society appeared, our disgusted sight would have even rested with pleasure on a furze bush. From such a region of sterility we gladly caught a gleam of cultivation, in some distant hills bordering on Brecknockshire; but more gladly still, on a sudden turn, we looked

looked down on the pleasing little valley LLANSAWEL, watered by a crystaline branch of the Cothy. The sun had now dispersed the mists through which we set out, and shone direct on the vale: from its verdant level high hills, enjoying different degrees of cultivation, rose on every side; and under one of them, at the further end of the valley, the well-whitened village sparkled through the intervening foliage.

This valley was immediately succeeded by another called EDWIN'S-FORD, a delightful spot, whose high encircling hills are clothed with extensive plantations to their very summits. In the bottom, is a large old manor house belonging to Colonel Williams, beautified "above, below, around," with leaden mercuries, shepherdesses, and sportsmen. Yet is this place, remaining in the genuine style of King William's reign, with all its absurdities, more interesting, as shewing us a specimen of that time, than if it were patched up with modern improvements; or a new villa, of the packing-case mode of building that now prevails. We rode through the long avenues of trees that extend from the house; and, quitting the valley, descended to another,

pleasingly

pleasingly decorated with wood, and the ruin of Talley church. A cheerful road, lined with

"Hedge-row elms and coppice green,"

now led us through a succession of swells and hollows, adorned with numerous plantations, particularly those of Lord Robert Seymour Conway's, to LLANDILO, a pretty market town, seated on a descent to the justly-famed vale of Towey.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

CHARMING VALE OF TOWEY — DINEVAWR CASTLE — GOLDEN GROVE — GRONGAR HILL — MIDDLETON HALL — CAREG-CANNON CASTLE — REFLECTIONS AT A FORD — GLENHEIR WATERFALL — AN ACCIDENT — PONT AR DULAS — RETURN TO SWANSEA.

AT Landilo we hastily put up our horses, anxious to feast on the beauties that disclosed themselves as we approached the spot; and, learning that NEWTON PARK, the delightful seat of Lord Dinevawr, afforded the most extensive and picturesque views of the vale, we engaged the keeper's attendance, and proceeded among waving lawns and woody gnolls to a bold hill, where,

"Bosom'd high in tufted trees,"

appeared the picturesque remains of DINEVAWR CASTLE. A winding path, cut through the

J. T. Barber del.

W. Pickett sculp.

the leafy honours of this hill, conveyed us beneath their dark umbrage to the top. We here climbed a massy fragment of the ruin, and entered a falling apartment, which, according to our guide's information, was once the lady's dressing-room; where, reaching a Gothic window overhung with ivy, a prospect burst upon us, teeming with the most fascinating circumstances of verdant nature; a galaxy of picturesque beauty, at which remembrance becomes entranced, and description faulters! Immediately beneath, the expansive vale of TOWEY appears in the fullest display of its charms; a hue of the richest green marks the luxuriance of the soil through the course of the valley, which, continually intersected with dusky hedge-rows, boasts all the elegance of garden parterres. The translucid Towey here wantons in perpetual variety among gay meadows and embowering plantations, where the eye with pleasure traces its fantastic meanders until they disappear behind projecting groves. The rich wood that surrounds the castellated hill clothes a precipitous descent to the water's edge, and, with other sylvan decorations of Newton park, forms the nearmost boundary of the vale.

On the opposite side, a huge wild mountain rears its head in desolation to the clouds; and beneath it Golden Grove *, despoiled of its leafy grandeur, now appears in diminished beauty. Several smaller seats and whitened hamlets start up in the valley, and, glistening through their appendant groves, give life to the scene. A little westward, GRONGAR HILL, immortalized by the muse of Dyer, and now the property of one of his descendants, advances on the vale and partly turns its course; but at some distance further, a rugged hill, bearing the mouldering fragments of Gruslwyn castle, proudly bestrides the plain and terminates the picture. Our view of this scene was favoured by the departing sun, which, just setting behind Gruslwyn ruin, threw a glowing tint over the landscape; its golden effulgence shone strongly on the varied hills, and gleamed on the lofty groves that adorned

* The mansion of Mr. Vaughan, the greatest landholder in Caermarthenshire. We did not visit this seat, or Middleton hall, also southward of the valley a few miles nearer Caermarthen, but without commanding any of its beauties. The latter place, built a few years since by Mr. Paxton, formerly a banker at Bengal, I understand to be the most splendid specimen of modern architecture in Wales; but, unfortunate in its situation, it is already neglected.

the

the vale; though the greater part of it was obscured in grandly-projected shadows *.

After a week's journey through an extensive tract of country, with few exceptions as devoid of picturesque interest as of productiveness, to come at once upon a scene so pregnant with the bounty and beauty of nature, was a feast for the feelings of philanthropy and picturesque enthusiasm that I shall never forget; nor do I imagine that the coldest mortal could fail of feeling a lively interest in so delightful a change—We

" —cast a longing ling'ring look behind"

on leaving this scene to examine the ruined castle. The extent of the apparent remains would lead one to consider it as a place of small importance; but we traced the vestiges of a wall and ditch at some distance from the conspicuous ruin, which indicate it to have been of considerable dimensions. The most

* The ruins of Druslwyn castle occupy a bold conical hill about half-way between Llandilo and Caermarthen, in the vale of Towey. Nearer Caermarthen, until lately, stood the venerable remains of Green castle, built by Uchtred, prince of Merionethshire, in 1138; but the ruin is now reduced to a few unimportant walls: both these fragments of antiquity are within view of the road.

noticeable parts are, the apartment already mentioned; a massive round tower, the ancient keep; and a subterraneous passage. Giraldus saw a castle here; but that was destroyed in the year 1194, about six years after his Itinerary; it was, however, soon rebuilt, and became the royal seat of the Princes of South Wales; but frequently changed its masters, until it fell to the crown of England. Henry the VIIth made a grant of it to Sir Rice ap Thomas, Knight of the Garter, a lineal descendant of the Welch Princes, and ancestor of the present proprietor. It was inhabited until within these 50 years, when the combustible part of it was destroyed by fire.

The mansion, built on a level about half a mile from the castle, is a large quadrangular structure, with turrets at each corner crowned with domes: it has lately been modernized; but appears to have been founded about two centuries back.—An avenue of trees extended from hence to the castle, which has lately been broken into clumps, in harmony with the general laying-out of the park. The hills of its strongly undulating surface are profusely covered with wood, and the hollows

lows enjoy a luxuriance of pasturage that can scarcely be equalled. On looking down some of these knolls, there appears no poetical licence in Dyer's description :

" Below me trees unnumber'd rise,
" Beautiful in various dyes :
" The gloomy pines, the poplar blue,
" The yellow beech, the sable yew,
" The slender fir that taper grows,
" The sturdy oak with broad-spread boughs;
" And beyond the purple grove,
" Haunt of Phyllis, Queen of Love !"

We often regretted that the picturesque ruin of the castle was excluded from our view by the lofty trees that surround it : the laudable jealousy with which Lord Dinevawr preserves the woody embellishments of his park appeared to us as extending too far in this instance; for were a few openings introduced, so as to exhibit from various points the grand dimensions of some ivied towers, a fine effect might be produced, and a picturesque contrast obtained to the numerous woody swells that abound in this beautiful domain.

The morning that we left Llandilo brought with it a scene of affliction to the surrounding country : one of those deluging rains which often do so much mischief in mountainous

countries fell with unparalleled violence during the night; when the vast accession of water, unable to discharge itself by the ordinary channels, swept away trees, fences, small buildings, cattle, and poultry in its devious course. Several mills were destroyed; and many an industrious cottager, awakened by the flood eddying round his bed, saw himself at once dispossessed of the fruits of many years hard savings:

> "Fled to some eminence, the husbandman
> "Helpless beheld the miserable wreck
> "Driving along; his drowning ox at once
> "Descending, with his labours scatter'd round,
> "He saw; and instant o'er his shivering thought
> "Came winter unprovided, and a train
> "Of clamant children dear."

On the storm's abating, we renewed our journey, and, over a handsome stone bridge crossing the swollen Towey, which had acquired a frightful hue from the red marle of the neighbouring lands, followed its course upon the road to Llangadock. At the first turnpike we deviated to the right, up a steep track rendered almost impracticable by loose craigs, by the side of a romantic dingle, down whose dark hollow a small cascade trickled with very good effect. In our ascent,

cent, delightful views were obtained of the upper vale of Towey, stretching from Llandilo bridge to the vicinage of Llandovery. The distant groves of Taliaris and Abermarle parks adorned this view, which was only inferior to that from Dinevawr-castle. As we advanced further, the rich prospect withdrew, and we found ourselves entering upon the dreary wilds of the Black Mountains; our track then became indistinct, wandering among rocks, floods, and up-rooted trees, unenlivened by a single habitation or human face. At length a cottage appeared, and we enquired our way to Careg-cannon castle; but "Dim "Sarsnic *" was all we could gather from the inhabitants. Thus constrained to proceed at random, we mounted a precipitous hill over a track that formed the bed of a torrent, and discovered the object of our search upon a bold rock, a considerable distance on our

* "Dim Sarsnic" (no Saxon) is a common expression, grounded on their anciently confounding all foreigners with their mortal enemies the Saxons; as the lower class in England consider every foreigner a Frenchman. This is said to be connected with a marked dislike and incivility to strangers; yet, so far as my observations extend, a greater disposition to acts of kindness is not to be met with in any part of the kingdom than in South Wales.

right: a little Welch farmer was also comprized in this view, working hard to repair the damages of the storm. We again enquired the best road to pursue, and again were answered with "Dim Sarsnic;" he, however, signified to us that he would fetch some one, and accordingly ran over two or three fields, and returned with his daughter, a fine buxom girl who had picked up a little English at Llandilo market. Without intreaty she offered to be our guide; and, fixing in the ground a spade with which she had been clearing a water-course, blythely led us, through mountainous wilds, within a short distance of the object of our search.

As we ascended the rock, crowned with the frowning ruin of Careg-cannon castle, a tempestuous cloud that broke against it drenched us with a plentiful shower: we sought the shelter of the building, but the wind raged with such violence, that we shrunk from the mouldering battlements lest they should overwhelm us. On crossing the ruin through its "stormy halls," we again recoiled on finding ourselves upon the brink of a tremendous precipice, which, except on the side by which we ascended, encompasses the castle in a perpendicular

pendicular rocky cliff upwards of four hundred feet in height. Then climbing among the mossy fragments of the castle, we discovered an aperture in the ground connected with a long subterraneous gallery dug through the solid rock, and lighted by windows cut in the cliff, though not visible from any situation without. In exploring this strange recess, rendered more fearful by the loud shrieks of the wind, we advanced, not without sensations of awe: it terminated in a large gloomy cavern, fit scene for

> "Murders, rapes, and massacres,
> "Acts of black night, abominable deeds,
> "Complots of mischiefs, treason, villanies
> "Ruthful to hear."

In this place we waited the passing of the storm, conjecturing it to have continued formerly to some adjacent spot, so as to form a sally-port or secret communication from the castle. On our return we felt more at liberty to examine the features of the ruin, which proved of the simplest construction, totally without ornament or a single Gothic form, and consisting of one irregular court with towers at each angle. If the Britons had any castles of stone before the arrival of the Normans

mans (a fact doubted by some antiquaries), I should imagine this to be one; although a late tourist, I know not on what authority, ascribes its erection to the time of Henry the First. The position must have been formerly impregnable, and its rough aspect marks it to have been constructed for the mere business of war. By

> ——————— a lonely tower,
> ——————— whose mournful chambers hold,
> To night-struck Fancy dreams, the yelling Ghost,

we passed from this wild abode, and floundered among ditch-like tracks to recover the high road from Llandilo to Swansea. In a romantic hollow we were stopped by a branch of the Towey; which, though in ordinary times an inconsiderable rivulet, was now swelled to a deep and menacing torrent. Here we found a party of men and women peasants on the opposite side, in doubt whether it might be safely crossed; but at length one of the men stripped and waded over, thus satisfying us that the ford was practicable. The rest followed; the men first getting rid of the lower part of their dress;—a trouble avoided by the females, who, unused to the encumbrance of shoes and stockings, had only

J T Barber delin

J Bluck sculp

only to hold up their clothes to the highest extent; and, thus prepared, the whole party moved toward us. Viewing this remnant of barbarity with disgust, we at the same time felt uneasy for the situation of the girls: but we might have spared ourselves that pain; their countenances proved them to be unembarrassed by the consciousness of shame; nor did their eyes wander from the precise line in which they were going. The transaction was to them a matter of perfect indifference.

It may reasonably be supposed, that the indecent customs of the Welch operate against the observance of chastity: yet seeing that the Welch are by no means deficient in that excellence, it may be supposed that were such scenes less frequent they would be so; but, as they are continually recurring, the imagination has no time to effervesce; it is at once saturated with naked facts, and on that principle the ebullitions of passion are kept under. On the one hand, those strong bulwarks decency and delicacy are done away; but on the other, the mind, fully informed, is not irritated by the conjurations of fancy; which may be a pretty fair set-off. Yet, without doubt,

doubt, their strongest safeguard exists in the considerative defence; for the moral turpitude and political infamy of unchastity is recognized in Wales to an extent that can hardly be conceived in circles of modern refinement: even at this day, in districts not yet drawn within the imposing vortex of trade *, a golden age of innocence may be discovered, where bastardy is unknown, or known but in recorded instances, in which the man is properly consigned to equal disgrace with the female offender.

Our travelling continued in rocky tracks, at the rate of a mile an hour, until we recovered the Llandilo road; from which we soon turned off, on the right, to visit Glenheir waterfall, in the grounds of Mr. Du-

* Along with the degeneracy of social affections, manly prowess, and other noble affections, that hang on nations and places absorbed in the pursuit of trade, the dereliction of chastity is greatly conspicuous. In Manchester, for example, an almost promiscuous intercourse prevails in the great class of the people: insomuch that the Magistrates attempt to check the increase of bastard children by inflicting stripes and imprisonment on the women who bear above a certain number! But why enumerate particular instances of the debasing tendency of too much trade, when the history of the world furnishes abundant proofs to establish the fact as an axiom.

baison,

baison, about five miles south of Llandilo. At this place the Loughor river pursues its course between steep banks clothed with various trees and shrubs. On one of the descents a walk is traced, with some ingenuity, in front of a small picturesque cascade formed by a tributary stream to the Loughor. This might be mistaken for the object sought; but, crossing a rustic bridge, the eye on a sudden encounters the whole river rushing beneath a portal of trees, and throwing itself over a ledge of black rock in a single fall of eighteen feet. The effect of the whole, seen through the gloom of pendent trees, is undoubtedly striking; though, it must be confessed, the sheet of water presenting the formality of an unbroken square is somewhat unpicturesque. The person who attended us pointed out the effects of the torrent at fifteen feet above its surface, to which height it was swelled in the morning by the late storm; a greater rise than was ever known before: the cataract then exhibited a scene more tremendously grand than imagination can picture, or words describe; yet some idea may be formed in conceiving so vast a bulk of water, bursting over the precipice, stunning with its roar,

and

and filling the atmosphere with its spray; while up-rooted trees, the shattered fragments of buildings, and other ruins, swept headlong on by the irresistible torrent, would illustrate its terrors, and complete a spectacle great indeed! Yet, alas, at how high a purchase, appeared from the lamentations of the neighbourhood! Nor were we without a share in the general calamity; for, crossing the Loughor at a ford about two miles further, my poney on a sudden slipped out of his depth, and we had separately to swim for our lives to the opposite bank. This disagreeable business was much aggravated; for my books, papers, and some other articles which I carried in a leather-case behind the saddle, were completely soaked, and several drawings utterly spoiled. My companion, having a taller horse, escaped, with only his boots full of water. Here it may not be amiss to apprize the traveller through Wales, that these fords (frequently occurring) are not unattended with danger after great falls of rain: at such times, a careful enquiry should be made of the people near them; a precaution that would have saved us our ducking; for it afterwards appeared, that no other travellers had

had crossed the ford during the day, but avoided it by taking a circuitous route.

In this plight we jogged on upwards of eight miles, with the unwelcome gloom of the Black Mountains on our left, and a pleasant diversified country on our right, to the village of Pont-ar-dulas, but which we did not reach before evening. The comfortable inn at this place afforded us a change of apparel and good cheer, that soon dissipated the inconveniences of our journey. On the following morning we rose early, and then found the place to possess many traits of picturesque attraction, being seated near a rapid river, and agreeably interspersed with woods. Thence we had a pleasant ride to Swansea; where we rejoined a party of our friends at breakfast, after a fortnight's excursion.

During our stay in this town, protracted to several days by its agreeable society, Mrs. Hatton, mistress of the bathing-house, and sister of the English Melpomene, exhibited her theatric powers on the humble boards of Swansea theatre. But, labouring under the misfortune of lameness, and the encumbrance of more human flesh than I ever before saw crowded in one female figure, she

she was obliged to go through her task, the recitation of Alexander's Feast, *sitting:* notwithstanding which *weighty* drawback, the lady did not fail to exhibit a vivid tincture of the family genius. Here too we were gratified with the news of an event, before whose solid advantages the victories of a century sink, in a rational estimate, like glittering tinsel before massive ingots. I was awakened at an early hour by the loud huzzas of the towns-people, and the frequent discharge of cannon from vessels in the harbour. The ships displayed their gayest colours; and the people, in dancing through the streets, congratulated each other on the long wished-for blessing of PEACE! The chagrin of two or three provision-monopolizers, and a few others whose interest was in opposition to the public weal, with the old subterfuge that it was not the proper time for peace, covering a real sentiment of endless war, passed unnoticed, nor formed a perceptible speck on the brilliancy of the people's joy!

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

NEATH ABBEY, TOWN, AND CASTLE — THE KNOLL—BRITON FERRY—FUNEREAL RITES—ABERAVON—MARGAM—ABBEY RUIN—PILE.

OUR tour now took an eastward direction. Crossing Swansea river by an exceeding good ferry, and passing a region of furnaces, we traversed a considerable hill to the neighbouring valley of NEATH; a spot that might be deemed pleasing, were it not overhung with the smoke of numerous manufactories, and its soil blackened with coal-works and rail-ways *. Neath abbey is a short distance west

* Rail-ways are so called, from being constructed of iron (in some places wooden) rails, placed in such a manner as to receive the wheels of a sort of low cart, used in the conveyance of metal and coals. These cars, as they are called, are of very ponderous structure; their wheels, grooved round, with a shoulder dipping on the inside, pass with great facility over the rails; which latter, projecting an inch or two above

west of the town, and its remains are extensive. Besides the abbey church, the walls of the offices and other apartments are yet standing; but, undecorated with verdure, and partaking of the sable hue that impinges on every object around, it fails to create an idea of beauty or grandeur. As we were exploring the dark recesses of the ruin, a number of haggard forms on a sudden darted from various apertures, and eagerly pressed toward us. Their wan countenances, half hidden by black matted hair, bore the strongest expression of misery; which was further heightened by a scanty ragged apparel, that scarcely covered their meagre limbs: upon their whole appearance one might have asked with Banquo,—

"What are these,
"So wither'd, and so wild in their attire,
"That look not like th' inhabitants o' the earth,
"And yet are on't?—You should be women;
"And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
"That you are so."—

the ground, are kept in their places by a sunken frame of wood. The advantages of these roads are very considerable for the purposes to which they are applied; insomuch that many persons have suggested their usefulness for public ways; but perhaps without considering the numerous practical objections that would encounter the project.

The

The poor creatures were the wives of miners, and women that worked in the manufactories, who burrowed and brought up their families in the cells of the ruin. Unceasing drudgery, however, was unable to obtain them the necessaries of life; much less a taste of those comforts, to which the exertion of useful labour might seem to have a just claim. An old woman, bent nearly double with years,

"Of ashy semblance, meagre, pale, and bloodless,"

gave us her account of the ruin. She shewed us the nuns' dining-room, the roof of which is still entire, supported by Saxon, or rather early Norman pillars and arches. From the refectory we passed to what was once the dormitory, and were shewn a nauseous dungeon, in which, as the legend of the ruin relates, offending nuns were wont to be confined. This abbey was built by Richard de Granville and Constance his wife, in the reign of Henry the First, for Cistertian monks, and dedicated to the Holy Trinity: at the dissolution of monasteries its revenues were valued at 150*l. per annum.* The abbey-house, about a century and a half since, formed an admired seat of the Hobby's family.

Neath, the Nidum of Antoninus, was formerly of greater extent and importance than at present; for, notwithstanding its flourishing manufactories, it now makes but a poor dirty appearance. The Castle, now an inconsiderable ruin, was built by Richard de Granville, one of Fitzhammon's knights, upon the site of a British fortress of very antient foundation; and was taken and in part burnt by Prince Llewelyn A. D. 1231. The Neath river limits that tract of country called Gower; it also formed the western boundary of the Lordship of Glamorgan, which anciently extended eastward to the river Usk. The latter district fell under the dominion of the Normans in the following manner.

In the year 1090, Jestyn, lord of Glamorgan, having a difference with Rees, King of Wales, had recourse to arms, and solicited the assistance of Fitzhammon, an Anglo-Norman chieftain, to support his cause. The confederates were successful; but, as it generally happens when foreign aid is required in domestic disputes, the remedy proved worse than the disease; for, on the plea that the conditions of their compact had not been fulfilled, Fitzhammon collected his forces, attacked

attacked Jestyn, and deprived him of his life and territory. Fitzhammon shared the spoil with twelve knights who accompanied him, rewarding each with a manor. Now, as a dominion thus acquired must be supported by the iron arm of coercion, we find the first attention of the conquerors directed to rearing fortresses on their domains; and shortly afterwards an appendant creation of religious houses makes its appearance, as a salvo for the slaughter and injustice that purchased their greatness. To this foundation most of the picturesque ruins that we are about to examine in Glamorganshire, and part of Monmouthshire, may be traced: it will, therefore, be necessary not to lose sight of this point of history.

We did not fail to admire the KNOLL, a castellated seat of Sir Herbert Mackworth's, occupying the summit of a hill at the termination of a noble lawn. The fine views which its elevation commands, encompassed by hanging woods and extensive plantations, its shady walks and picturesque cascades, render it a place deservedly attractive. Beneath the tufted hills of this estate, we passed

from Neath in our way to Briton ferry; and soon remarked a single stone monument *, a massive paralellopiped, on a height to our left: another immediately afterwards appeared in a field close to the road on the right.

From these monuments of other times, however, the rich hanging woods and open groves of BRITON FERRY attracted our interest, clothing that charming domain of Lord Vernon's.

The extensive plantations spread over several bold hills westward of the Neath river, whose broad translucid stream here emerges in a fine sweep between high woody banks, partly broken into naked cliffs, and soon unites with the sea. From a delightful shady walk impendent over the stream, we branched off into an "alley green" that led us up a steep hill covered with large trees and tangled underwood: the ascent was judiciously traced where several bare craigs projecting from the soil formed an apposite contrast to the luxuriant verdure that prevailed around. On

* *Single stones* may be considered among the remotest monuments of antiquity: we read of such in the Old Testament, raised in commemoration of signal victories, and as noted sepulchres. Jacob erected one at Lug; and placed another over the grave of Rachael.

gaining

gaining the summit the charms of Briton ferry disclosed themselves in

"An ample theatre of Sylvan grace"

of more than common beauty; beyond which the Bristol channel, bounded by the aerial tint of its opposite coast, formed the distance. But from a roaming prospect the eye gladly returned to repose on the local beauties of the scene; the tufted knoll, the dark glade, and the majestic river. In returning, we passed the mansion, a very ordinary building; but paused on the neat simplicity of the village-church adjoining, and its well-ordered cemetery.

The custom of planting ever-greens over the graves of departed friends, and bedecking them with flowers at certain seasons of the year, is here attended to with peculiar care; and to this pleasing tribute of affection, characteristic of Wales, David ap-Gwillim, a Welch bard who flourished about the middle of the fourteenth century, thus sweetly alludes in one of his odes:

"O whilst thy season of flowers, and thy "tender sprays thick of leaves remain; I "will pluck the roses from the brakes; the

" flowerets of the meads, and gems of the " woods; the vivid trefoils, beauties of the " ground, and the gaily smiling bloom of the " verdant herbs, to be offered to the memory " of a chief of fairest fame: Humbly will " I lay them on the grave of Ivor!"

Shakspeare also, with exquisite tenderness:

" With fairest flowers while summer lasts
" I'll sweeten thy sad grave: thou shalt not lack
" The flower that 's like thy face, pale Primrose; nor
" The azur'd Harebell, like thy veins; no, nor
" The leaf of Eglantine, whom not to slander
" Outsweeten'd not thy breath."

Highly pleased with Briton ferry, we proceeded along the coast, and passed through the little town of ABERAVON. Its copper and tin works added no charms to the verdant fertility of this part of the country, which appeared ornamented with several gentlemen's seats, and well planted hills; but, grandly rising above comparison, "the mighty hill of MARGAM," a steep mountain entirely shaded with oaks from the base to its "cloud-cap't" summit, arrested our chief attention.

Margam park, belonging to Mr. Talbot, is chiefly to be noticed for its orangery; a mag-

J.T. Barber delin.

Bluck sculp

a magnificent pavilion of the Doric order, 327 feet in length, wherein the orange-trees are arranged in unfavourable weather: but on our visit, these trees, to the amount of a hundred and fifty, from six to ten feet high, and all in full bearing, were agreeably disposed in a sequestered part of the garden *. Margam abbey was until within these few years the mansion of the estate; but it is now pulled down: some low ruins, however, remain, and the walls of its elegant but neglected chapter-house. This structure is thus described by Mr. Wyndham, who visited the spot about thirty years since: "It is an elegant Gothic building, of a date "subsequent to that of the church. Its "vaulted roof is perfect, and supported by a "clustered column rising from the centre of "the room. The plan of this chapter-house "is an exact circle, fifty feet in diameter. "The just proportion of the windows, and "the delicate ribs of the arches, which all "rise from the centre column and the walls, "gradually diverging to their respective points "above, must please the eye of every spec-

* They were wrecked on the Margam estate upwards of a century since.

"tator;

"tator; and, what is uncommon in light "Gothic edifices, the external elevation is "as simple and uniform as its internal, there "being no projecting buttresses to disturb or "obstruct its beauty."—"The preservation "of this building led me to conclude, that "much attention had been given to the lead "that originally covered it; but, to my asto- "nishment, I heard that the lead had long "since been removed, and that the only se- "curity of the roof against the weather was a "thick *oiled paper*, which by no means pre- "vented the rain from penetrating and fil- "tering through the work." Mr. Wyndham concludes by trusting, that, as the present proprietor is a lover of antiquities, the deficiency would be corrected. But, unfortunately, the edifice was left to its fate, and the roof soon fell in: thus one of the finest specimens of Gothic architecture in this or any other country is lost to the eye of taste and science.

Just perceptible from the turf we traced the foundation of the Abbey Church, and the bases of four clustering pillars that most probably supported the tower; the steps of the altar were also visible, besprinkled with grass; and,

and, turning over some fragments, we picked up part of the chalice for containing holy water, and several of those coloured glazed tiles which were used in the early Norman age for paving principal buildings, but commonly called Roman tiles. We were informed by Mr. Snook, the intelligent gardener of the place, who was present at the dilapidation of the abbey, that the pavement formed with these tiles was the lowermost of three which were then removed; and that on digging deeper they came to an immense heap of human bones. This pavement is still in many places remaining, though nearly concealed by a covering of moss. Many curious sculptured stones of high antiquity are to be met with in the park, and in the village adjoining; the church of which presents, in its elevation, a more pleasing symmetry and composition than any Norman work that I remember to have seen *. A shady walk, carried beneath the leafy mantle of Margam's hill, passes a ruined chapel, and a loggan or rocking-stone, in its way to the

* This is called part of the Abbey church in Grose's Antiquities; but, as the foundation of that edifice is demonstrable near the chapter-house, it appears to be an error.

summit,

summit, where a prospect of uncommon extent greets the beholder. Eglis Nunne, about two miles south of Margam, now a farm-house, was formerly a nunnery subject to that abbey.

Renewing our journey, we left Kenfig on our right, where some vestiges of a castle built by one of Fitzhammon's knights are said to appear, and proceeded to PYLE. The inn here, built by Mr. Talbot, and which might be mistaken for a nobleman's seat, affords excellent accommodation for travellers, who are frequently induced to make it their head-quarters while visiting the several objects in the neighbourhood.—Leaving Pyle, we soon found ourselves on Newton Down, and from its height discovered the range of hills forming the opposite boundary of the vale of Cowbridge, in which a bold hill crowned with Penline Castle was eminently conspicuous. On looking back, we were pleased with a comprehensive view of the country that we had lately traversed: beyond the wide bay of Swansea, the whitened habitations of Ostermouth caught our eye; the sulphureous clouds revolving from the works of Swansea and Neath were only divided

vided by the projection of Kilway hill; and the picturesque knolls of Briton ferry appeared sunk into comparative littleness beneath the towering dimensions of Margam's shady mountain.—Our tour now became thickly interspersed with baronial castles and other monuments of feudal times, interesting either by their historical events or picturesque decay.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

OGMORE CASTLE — EWENNY PRIORY — DUNRAVEN-HOUSE — ST. DONATT'S CASTLE — LLANBITHIAN CASTLE — COWBRIDGE — PENLINE CASTLE — COITY CASTLE — LLANTRISSENT — BENIGHTED RAMBLE TO PONT-Y-PRIDD — WATERFALLS.

OGMORE CASTLE is situated on the eastern bank of the river Ogmore, near the road to Cowbridge; its remains, however, are very inconsiderable, consisting merely of the keep and some outer walls. Caradoc, in his History of Wales, says, that the manor and castle of Ogmore were bestowed by Fitzhammon on William de Londres, one of his knights; from which its foundation may be dated prior to the Norman conquest. The manor courts are still held in a thatched hovel near it, which appears like an overgrown pig-

pig-stye. Here, according to the custom of the times, a religious institution followed the acquisition of power. William de Londres, or his descendant John, built EWENNY PRIORY, at the distance of a mile from the castle, and also near the road to Cowbridge: but in this the proprietor seems not to have lost sight of his worldly interest; for the strong embattled walls and towers that appear among the ruins of this building would lead one to consider it as intended not less for the purposes of war than of priestcraft; and its situation on the bank of the Wenny was admirably adapted for the defence of that part of his domain. In the hall of the house, a gloomy building, are several racks, which appear to have been used for the lodging of arms. The church is a venerable massive structure, wherein unornamented heavy arches repose on short bulky columns of the rudest workmanship: it contains a monument of Paganus de Turbeville, supposed to be the grandson of Fitzhammon's knight of that name. The thick columns, plain capital, and circular arches of this edifice, denote it to be of the earliest Norman architecture; and might lead one to suppose it to

be

be of Saxon origin, did not historical facts invalidate the conjecture. Leland says that it was founded for Benedictine monks; but neither he, Dugdale, nor Tanner, gives us the date of its foundation. A. D. 1141 it was made a cell of St. Peter's of Gloucester.

Not far from Ewenny, on the sea-coast, is DUNRAVEN-HOUSE, or castle, as it is called by Caradoc; a mis-shapen dismal building, only to be admired for its situation on a lofty sea promontory, commanding extensive prospects. William de Londres, Lord of Ogmore (says Caradoc) won the lordships of Kydwelhy and Carnewilhion in Carmarthenshire from the Welchmen; and gave to Sir Arnold Butler, his servant, the castle and manor of Dunraven. It continued a long time in the possession of his descendants; but at length fell to the Vaughans, the last of whom, as tradition relates, was such an unprincipled wretch, that he set up lights, and used other devices to mislead seamen, in order that they might be wrecked on his manor. But his crimes did not escape punishment; for it is said that three of his sons were drowned in one day by the following accidents. Within sight of the house is a large

large rock called the Swancar, dry only at low water; to which two of his sons went in a boat to divert themselves: but not taking care to fasten their vessel, on the rising of the tide it was washed away, and they left to the horrors of their fate; which was inevitable, as the family had no other boat, nor was there any other in the neighbourhood. Their distress was seen from the house; and in the confusion their infant brother, being left alone, fell into a vessel of whey, and was drowned almost at the same instant with the other two. This was universally looked upon as a judgement for the iniquities abovementioned; and Mr. Vaughan was so struck with the transaction, that he immediately sold the house to Mr. Wyndham, ancestor of the present proprietor.—Two extraordinary caverns, about a mile westward of the house, we neglected to visit: the one called the Cave is described to be a passage worn through a projecting stack of rocks, running parallel with the sea-shore, and forming a kind of rude piazza, with an entrance to the south, of very grand effect. The other, called the Windhole, is a deep cavern, a little to the east of the Cave: its depth from the entrance

measures seventy-seven yards. There are two or three small fissures through the roof of the cavern to the land above, a considerable distance from the edge of the cliff; over which if a hat be laid, it will be blown back into the air with considerable violence; but this only happens when the wind blows fresh from the South-east.

ST. DONATT'S CASTLE, a few miles further on the coast, and about five south-west of Cowbridge, is an extensive structure, of much antique beauty, and is still partially inhabited. Its garden, descending in terraces from the south wall, was formerly much admired, but now

> "Sunk are the bowers in shapeless ruin all,
> "And the long grass o'ertops the mould'ring wall.

Although loftily situated, the castle is so surrounded with high groves, as only to be seen with advantage from some heights in the adjoining park: on one of them is a watch-tower, which affords a prospect truly grand and extensive. This castle is of very remote foundation, although the greater part of the building indicates the work of latter ages. We learn from Powell's translation of Caradoc, that

that the castle and manor of St. Denewit, or St. Donatt, was apportioned to Sir William le Esterlong, alias Stradling, on the conquest of Glamorgan. The Stradlings, outliving the descendants of all the other twelve Knights, held it for 684 years; but they becoming extinct, the estate fell to Busy Mansell, Esq. *

Between St. Donatt's and Cowbridge is Lantwit, a poor village, but once a large borough town. On the north side of its church are some old British relics, consisting of high carved stones; but whether sepulchral or otherwise is not determined. LLANBITHIAN, or ST. QUINTIN'S CASTLE, is situated about half a mile south of Cowbridge. The leading feature of this ruin is a massive gateway, now converted into a barn; which, as well as the other parts, denotes considerable original strength, and is said to have been built prior to the arrival of Fitzhammon. The castle and manor fell to the share of Sir Robert St. Quintin on the division of Glamorgan; but it passed from his descendants in the reign of

* In this neighbourhood several Roman coins have been dug up, among which were some very scarce ones of Æmilianus and Marius.

Henry the Third, and is now the property of Lord Windsor. COWBRIDGE is a neat little town seated on the banks of a small river *.

PENLINE CASTLE, loftily seated on a bold hill, and commanding a prospect of uncommon diversity and extent, is about a mile distant from Cowbridge. From the lines of Edward Williams, a native poet, it may appear that it serves as a barometer for the neighbourhood:

"When the hoarse waves of Severn are screaming aloud,
"And Penline's lofty castle's involv'd in a cloud;
"If true the old proverb, a shower of rain
"Is brooding above and will soon drench the plain."

This structure is of very ancient date: in some parts of the building the stones are laid in the *herring-bone* fashion; a mode observed in the oldest parts of Guildford, Corfe, and others of the most ancient castles. The mansion near to the ruin was built by Mr. Sergeant Sey, and is now possessed by Miss Gwinit, by a bequest of the late Lady Vernon's.

* Llancarvan, about three miles from Cowbridge, is said to be the site of a Monastery built by St. Cadocus in the year 500.—Boverton, a village a short distance from Cowbridge in the road to Cardiff, is thought to be the Bovium of the Romans.

A re-

A retrograde movement, hastily performed in a shower of rain, brought us to BRIDGEND, a straggling little town, built on the opposing banks of the river Ogmore. From this place a road passes to the village of COITY and its dismantled castle. This ruin stands on a plain ground, and is prettily interspersed with various trees and underwood: its foundation is generally attributed to Paganus de Turbeville, one of Fitzhammon's knights.—The continuance of our ride to Llantrissent boasted little interest; until, making a curve near the seven-mile stone, when the wide undulating vale of Cowbridge exhibited a most extensive tract of beautiful fertility: among the high hills circumscribing the vale, that sustaining Penline castle rose with superior importance. The whole laid out in rich pastures and meadows, continually intersected with tufted inclosures, and enlivened with embowered hamlets and detached whitened buildings, formed a *coup d'œil* of considerable interest.

The old town of LLANTRISSENT appeared within a small distance of us, long before we arrived at it: for, perched upon the summit of a high hill of remarkable steepness, it

was only by a circuitous road, then of sufficiently fatiguing ascent, that it could be approached. This place, comprised nearly in one narrow irregular street, and made up of poor Gothic habitations, has so little of modern appearance engrafted on it, that it may be interesting as a specimen of ancient times, but scarcely in any other respect. The castle is nearly all destroyed; the fragment of a lofty round tower, and the vestiges of its outworks, nearly concealed by tangled shrubs, being all the remains of it. The church is a large Norman edifice, and from the cemetery a wonderful prospect is obtained of the surrounding country: although a hazy state of the atmosphere denied us the whole of its extent, enough remained to assure us that it must be considerable.

Pont-y-pridd, or New Bridge, was our next destination. My companion went forward to secure accommodation at the Bridgewater Arms, a comfortable inn about half a mile beyond it, while I was engaged in sketching some subjects about Llantrissent; at which task I incautiously protracted my stay

——" until

——— " until th' approach of night,
" The skies warm blushing with departing light;
" When falling dews with spangles deck'd the glade,
" And the low sun had lengthen'd ev'ry shade."

As I proceeded from Llantrissent, cultivation diminished; and from that fertile and populous district, bordering the Severn, I found myself entering upon the unfrequented wilds of the interior country. It soon became so dark, that I could but just distinguish the broken road that I was travelling; which, although a Welch turnpike, a modern farmer in England would be ashamed to own for his cartway. Not a human face or habitation presented itself, nor any relief from silence, except the uncheering note of the screech owl. At length, however, the distant murmur of a waterfall saluted me; which, growing louder as I advanced, presently accumulated to a hoarse roar; and, by the direction of the sound, it appeared that I was travelling on a precipice above the torrent. A plentiful shower falling at this instant did not add to the comforts of my situation; and I found by the motion of the horse, that I was on a steep descent; while his frequent slides and stumbles proved that

he was on very rugged ground, and probably out of any track. In this dilemma imagination, ever active in magnifying concealed danger, pictured my situation as tottering on the brink of some such chasm as that of the Devil's bridge. Here I might have exclaimed with Ossian's Colma: "It is night; I am alone, forlorn on the hill of storms. The wind is heard on the Mountains; the torrent shrieks down the rock. No hut receives me from the rain; forlorn on the hill of winds." But to remain under such apprehensions were worse than to encounter danger, and I slowly moved on in almost total darkness; until, making a sudden turn, I beheld the tops of the neighbouring hills illumined in a strange manner. In a few moments a gleam of light, transmitted by reflection through an opening in some trees, shone on my track, and discovered a dark huge figure standing at my horse's head. I was scarcely collected from my surprize when my bridle was forcibly arrested, and a loud but unintelligible voice seemed to demand that I should stop. Already was I conceiving how to repel the attack, when the man, observing that I did not understand Welch, civilly accosted me in

in imperfect English, and assured me that I was on the edge of a precipice. Nor did he leave me with this service, but kindly led my horse to the little village of PONT-Y-PRIDD, then within a short distance. Here, while regaling over a mug of ale, my conductor accounted for the light that surprized me: it proceeded from an immense bonfire of a party of colliers in some distant mountains, rejoicing at the blessing of peace. At this place I determined to fix my quarters; nor could the offer of a guide and lanthorn, to conduct me to the superior accommodation of the Bridgewater arms, induce me to tempt again the dangers of the night, or quit the coarse barley bread, salt butter, and miserable beer of the village alehouse.

Early in the morning my companion rejoined me, when we visited Pont-y-pridd, the celebrated bridge of Glamorganshire. This extraordinary piece of masonry consists of a single arch, whose chord is 147 feet, thrown across the Taffe. William Edward, an ingenious mason of this country, who built it, failed in two preceding attempts, which would have proved his ruin; but the gentry in the neighbourhood laudably supported

ported his ingenuity, although at first unsuccessfully exerted, and enabled him to complete the present structure. The great beauty of this arch arises from the simplicity of its construction, and indeed from its very defect as a roadway; for the passage over the bridge is not sloped away into the adjoining roads, as it might be; but precipitately descends on each side, following the line of the arch. This circumstance, and its being defended with only a very low parapet, gives the bridge a remarkably light appearance. Situated in a romantic hollow, and abruptly jetting from the bold woody banks of the river, it looks a magic bow thrown across by the hands of fairies.

Two waterfalls in this neighbourhood deserve notice. One occurs about half a mile above the bridge. We proceeded to it through a delightful sylvan path on the bank of the river, and under the beetling brow of Craig-er-esk. The river is seen for a considerable distance struggling through a region of rocks, which in some places rise in large masses above its surface, and in others appear through the transparency of the stream shelving to a considerable depth; wearing throughout

throughout the odd appearance of a vast assemblage of cubes, variously heaped, but with one face constantly horizontal: at length the river breaks over a compact strata; yet only in a fall of eight or ten feet, which is divided into several streams. The white foam of the river, and the light grey tint of the rocks, afford a strong contrast to the mixed verdure and dark shadows of its banks; but upon the whole the subject is rather to be noticed for its singularity than for any leading points of picturesque beauty. More agreeably composed appeared to us the other cascade of the tributary river Rhayder, about two miles distant from the bridge. The dark rocks that occasion the fall; the surrounding craigs; the light and pendant foliage that adorns them, and the vigorous trees that emerge from the banks, are all disposed with the utmost symmetry, and form a highly-pleasing picture, though of inconsiderable dimensions.

CHAP. XII.

SCENERY OF THE TAFFE — STUPENDOUS RUINS OF CAERPHILLY CASTLE — THE LEANING TOWER — FINE VIEW FROM THORNHILL — CARDIFF CASTLE — ECCLESIASTICAL DECAY OF LANDAFF — THE CATHEDRAL.

FROM Pont-y-pridd we made another excursion toward Merthyr-tidvill; less to witness the lately-acquired importance of the town in consequence of the great iron-works established in its neighbourhood, than to trace the beauties of the Taffe through its romantic valley. At one time, a towering hill completely mantled with wood lifted its shaggy summit to the clouds; in succession, naked rocks perpendicularly descended to the water; or, through favoured hollows, a stripe of green meadow would gently slope and mix its verdure with the stream. As we advanced,

advanced, the narrow valley still further contracted, and the river, confined by the approaching bases of the mountains, assumed the character of a torrent. Our road continued on one margin of the river, and a canal, singularly abounding with locks, kept pace with us on the other; to the Cyclopean region of Merthyr-tidvill *. We did not enter the town, but re-measured our steps to Ponty-pridd; and about four miles below it bade adieu to the romantic course of the Taffe, in deviating up a steep confine of its valley towards the town and castle of Caerphilly.

The celebrated ruin of CAERPHILLY CASTLE soon appeared at some distance beneath us, occupying the centre of a small plain, which, with its surrounding amphitheatre of hills, presented a display of regular fences and cultivation that strikingly contrasted with the district that we had just left. The idea formed on a first view of this stupendous pile is rather that of a ruined town than a castle:

* From this place a turnpike-road extends through the mountains to Brecon, a district so wild as not to present a village, and scarcely a habitation in an extent of eighteen miles. — In the neighbourhood of Merthyr-tydvill I find described Morlashe castle, a ruin.

it

it is by much the largest ruin in Britain, although its dimensions are somewhat inferior to those of Windsor castle. The high outer rampart, with its massive abutments and frequent towers, still in a great measure entire, conveys at once a clear impression of the great extent of the fortress. In entering upon an examination of the ruin we passed the barbican *, now built up into habitations; and, proceeding between two dilapidated towers, entered the great area of the castle:—a range of building, beneath the rampart on our right, once formed the barracks of the garrison. We then advanced to that pile of superior building, *i. e.* of citadel, hall, chapel, state and other apartments, which is generally considered as the castle, in distinction from the encircling area and its wall: clambering over the fragments of another drawbridge and its defending towers, we entered the first court, which appears to have comprised the citadel: thence we passed through a large gateway, with several grooves for portcullises, to the principal court of the castle. The area of this court is seventy yards

* An outwork that defended the drawbridge.

by

J. T. Barber delin.

J. Black sculp.

by forty: on the south side is that princely apartment, by some considered the hall, and by others the chapel: but, whichever it may have been, vestiges of much original beauty appear in the elegant outline of its four large windows; the grand proportions of the chimney-piece, and the light triplet pillars, with arches that go round the room. The appearance of mortice holes in the walls for the ends of beams, at the height of about the middle of the windows, led Camden to suppose that the cieling was projected from thence, and that an apartment above was lighted by the upper portion of the windows; but surely at a time when symmetry in building was so well cultivated, and where it appears to have been so successfully applied, such a ridiculous contrivance could not have taken place: more probably, as I conceive, from those mortices a support was derived for a lofty arched roof, or a gallery *. Eastward of the hall, is the curiosity of a leaning tower, a bulky fragment of the ruin between seventy and eighty feet

* The external staircase entrance to the hall spoken of by Camden, "the roof whereof is vaulted and supported by twenty arches," is now rendered nearly impassable by rubbish.

in

in height, whose walls are of a prodigious thickness: it hangs nearly eleven feet out of the perpendicular, and is only held together by the strength of its cement. How or when this phenomenon happened no legend informs us; but it has remained in this state many centuries. As the adjoining towers, and all the standing parts of the ruin, remain perpendicular, the cause must have arisen from a local failure of the foundation: hence I am of opinion, that a solution of the phenomenon may be found in the effects of a mine, and which probably took place during the long siege which Hugh le Despenser sustained in this castle in the time of Edward the Second. Near this part of the ruin a place is shewn as the mint, with two furnaces for melting metal. From this chamber we ascended a spiral staircase to the corridor, still in very good preservation, which, lighted by small windows, and passing round the principal court, formed a communication with the different apartments. The external view of the western entrance of the ruin, with its ponderous circular towers venerably shaded with ivy, is remarkably striking; and, with the remains of its drawbridge and defending outwork, may be considered

sidered as the most entire part of the ruin. An artificial mound some distance off, but within the works of the castle, was most likely used for exploratory purposes.

From the great plan of this castle, and there being no direct evidence to the contrary, its foundation has been attributed to the Romans; and some ingenious arguments have been adduced to prove, that it was their Bullaum Silurum. But it sufficiently appears, that no considerable part of the present fortress was built by them, as the predatory army of Rhys Tycan took and rased Caerphilly castle in 1221. The best supported opinion is that of the Hon. Daines Barrington, who attributes the present erection to Edward the First.—Caerphilly has lately increased from an obscure village to a well-built little town; and the respectable appearance of its two inns may be in a great measure dated from the great increase of the visitants of the castle*.

We

* On a mountain near Caerphilly is a monument known by the name of *Y Muen hir*. It is a quadrangular stone pillar, rather inclining, and about eight feet high: close to the base is a mound, inclosing the space of six yards; and in

 the

We left Caerphilly, over its hilly boundary, on the road to Cardiff; where we noticed the singular appearance of some peasants digging coals from the surface of the ground. At the extremity of this tract, THORNHILL, a grand elevation, afforded us a most extensive prospect, which, illuminated by an evening sun, formed a picture of uncommon brilliancy. The wide plain of Cardiff displayed for many miles, in every direction, a gratifying extent of Nature's bounty, in an endless variety of cultivation, chequered with numberless hedgerows, and enlivened by several villages, whose neatly-whitened walls glistened through their appendant foliage: the rich verdure was in one part varied by the russet hue of an extensive warren. At the extremity of this tract appeared the expansive Severn, in which the two islands of the steep and flat Holmes were conspicuous; and afar off the bold hills of Somersetshire closed the prospect. We slowly descended from the spot commanding this range of objects, and

the midst, a square area. On the pillar is an inscription in Welch, which signifies, "May'st thou awake;" from which it is inferred to be a funereal monument.—Grose's Antiquities.

travelled

travelled on a good road towards Cardiff, with the episcopal ruins of Landaff at a small distance on our right.

On entering CARDIFF, the capital of Glamorganshire, between the ivy-mantled walls of its castle, and the mouldering ruin of a house of White Friars, we were much pleased with the aspect of the town: nor were we less so on a closer examination of its neat and well-paved streets; it appearing to us one of the cleanest and most agreeable towns in Wales. The high tower of its church, crowned with four transparent Gothic pinnacles, had long engaged our interest; but on a near view we did not find the body of the church to correspond with it; it being of an older date, a plain Norman structure. This, I believe, was the conventual church of the Franciscan Friars that are described as having occupied the eastern suburb of the town. The other parish church, for Cardiff is divided into two parishes, was undermined by the action of the river, about a century and a half since, and fell down. The house of the White Friars has been already noticed; and without the west gate stood a monastery of Black Friars. This town was formerly

encompassed by a wall, and vestiges of its four gates yet remain. Cardiff, having the benefit of a good harbour, carries on a brisk trade with Bristol, and other places, and has of late considerably increased its commercial importance: but perhaps its chief interest with tourists will be derived from its castle.

CARDIFF CASTLE, a seat of the Marquis of Bute, (Baron Cardiff and Earl of Windsor), was until lately a Gothic structure of considerable elegance; but having undergone a repair, without attention to the antique style of architecture, it presents a motley combination, in which the remaining Gothic but serves to excite our regret for the greater portion destroyed. The misguided direction of this work is prominently conspicuous in the enlargement of the building, wherein fashionable square windows appear throughout the lower apartments, while the original character of the edifice is imitated in the Gothic lines of the upper windows: a strange violation of common propriety, to raise an antique superstructure upon a modern foundation! The part of the castle which is kept up is a single range of building; and an elegant machicolated tower, overlooking the whole, still

frowns

frowns defiance on the petty innovations beneath. The internal has been entirely new-planned, and a number of portraits of the present lord's progenitors are ranged in the apartments, with the principal events of their lives, emblazoned in letters of gold; but they are for the most part indifferently executed. In front of the building is a spacious lawn, from the trim surface of which rises an artificial mound, bearing the mouldering ruin of the ancient keep *, carefully shorn of shrub and briar. In the tower, at the entrance, a dark damp dungeon is described to have been the prison of Robert duke of Normandy; in which he was confined near thirty years, after being deprived of his sight and inheritance by his younger brother Henry the First. But it is more probable that he had the whole range of the castle; for, independent of the improbability that any human creature could live so long in such a place, we have the authority of Odo Vitalis and William of Malmesbury, that Henry made his imprisonment as easy as possible; furnishing him with an elegant table, and buffoons to divert him.

* This is called the magazine, from its having been applied to that purpose in the civil wars of Charles the First.

A high rampart incloses the whole; round the top of which a walk is carried, affording many pleasing views of the surrounding country.

When Robert Fitzhammon conquered and divided the lordship of Glamorgan with his twelve knights, he reserved the town of Cardiff, among other estates, for himself, and erected this castle: here he held his courts of Chancery and Exchequer; the former on the first Monday in every month, when his knights or their heirs were bound to attend, and were then entitled to apartments in the outer court of the castle; which privilege, says Sir John Price, their heirs or assigns enjoy to this day.

This castle has frequently experienced the vicissitudes of war. Soon after its erection, one Ivor Black, a little resolute Welchman, marched hither privately, with a troop of mountaineers, and surprized the castle in the night; carrying off William Earl of Gloucester (Fitzhammon's grandson), together with his wife and son; whom he detained prisoners until he obtained satisfaction for some injuries that he had suffered. It was also taken by Maelgon and Rhys gyre anno 1282;

and

and again by the parliamentary forces in the civil wars, after a long siege.

A pleasant walk over the fields led us to the episcopal city of LANDAFF, now in extent an inconsiderable village: this deserted spot occupies a gentle eminence in the great plain of Cardiff. The west front of the cathedral is an admirable relic of Norman architecture, with two elegant towers of extraordinary height, profusely enriched with the best sculpture of that age: here all the apertures are circularly arched; but the windows of part of the nave, yet remaining, are Gothic. Upon the chancel's falling to decay some score years since, a great sum was expended in raising the present church upon the old stock; but surely such an absence of taste and common sense was never before instanced: beneath the solemn towers has sprung up a fantastic summer-house elevation, with a Venetian window, Ionic pilasters, and flower-pot jars upon the parapet. The same sort of window is coupled with the elegant line of the ornamented Gothic in other parts of the structure; and within, a huge building upon the model of a heathen temple surrounds the altar; which, with two thrones, darken and fill up

nearly half the church. From this mass of inconsistencies we turned to the inspection of several ancient monuments, which were chiefly recumbent, and from several marks of recent damage appeared to be much neglected *.

The cathedral, now in ruins, was built by Bishop Urban, anno 1120, upon the site of one founded by St. Dubritius in the commencement of the sixth century, and dedicated to more saints than I have room to enumerate. Urban also built a palace here, which was destroyed by Owen Glendower: its high outer walls and gateway, however, remain, and form an inclosure to a garden. A large mansion adjoining, occupied by Mr. Matthews, is, I understand, attached to the bishopric †.

* There is no cross aile to this cathedral, as there is to all the others in England and Wales: nor any middle steeple, as there is to all the others except Bangor and Exeter.

† Castle coch, or the Red castle, situated upon a high bank of the river Taffe, about four miles above Landaff, is a small ruin which we neglected to visit.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

ENTRANCE OF MONMOUTHSHIRE — ANCIENT ENCAMPMENTS — CASTLETON — TREDEGAR PARK — NEWPORT; CHURCH; AND CASTLE — EXCURSION TO MACHEN PLACE — PICTURESQUE VIEW FROM CHRIST CHURCH — GOLD CLIFF — CAERLEON'S ANTIQUITIES — ENCAMPMENTS — LORD HERBERT OF CHERBURY — LANTARNAM — LANGIBBY CASTLE.

ON quitting Cardiff, we soon entered MONMOUTHSHIRE * in crossing Rumney bridge. The church of Rumney is a large Gothic edifice,

* Monmouthshire has been separated from Wales by the judicial arrangement of later times; yet the character of the county throughout is so entirely Cambrian, that I cannot consider myself out of Wales until after having passed the Wye. Indeed, this highly-varied and interesting district may be considered as an epitome of the whole principality. The mountains stretching over the north-west of Monmouthshire

edifice, with an embattled tower. Nearly opposite to it, on the left of the road, crowning a steep bank of the river, is an old encampment of an irregular figure, with a triangular outwork; and a short distance further, at Pen-y-pile, another occurs of a polyhedrous form. As we proceeded, the elevated mansion and extensive woods of RUPERAH, an elegant seat belonging to a branch of the Morgan family, appeared finely situated beneath the brow of some hills bordering the vale of Caerphilly; and on a gentle hill below it, KEVEN-MABLE, an ancient seat of the Kemy's family. At the rural little

shire may vie with any in South-Wales, and even aspire to the majestic wildness of some in North-Wales; the rich fertility, or broken precipices accompanying the course of the Severn, Wye, and Usk, with much contrastive grandeur, possess the highest pretensions to picturesque fame; and its numerous ruins and other monuments of antiquity are among the most celebrated in the kingdom.—An elegant and able work, in two volumes, quarto, has been lately published, descriptive of Monmouthshire, and illustrated by no less than 90 excellent plates. The researches of its author (Mr. Coxe) have been so accurate and complete, as to leave little more for a succeeding tourist to do than to select and transcribe. The descriptions I always found highly satisfactory and just; I have therefore, in the generality of instances, thought it unnecessary to follow any other authority for documents in history and antiquities.

village

village of St. Mellons, the old and new roads to Newport unite: we took the latter, which is the lowermost and nearest, traced on a range of gentle eminences skirting Wentloog level, an extensive fertile plain won from the sea. This wide flat, extending from the Rumney to the Usk rivers, is relieved by the intersections of hedges and drains, and has a sprinkling of white cottages; among which the towers of St. Bride's, Marshfield, and Peterston churches rise conspicuously. Our route passed through Castleton, where there was formerly a castle; of which, however, only a small artificial mount, the site of its citadel, now inclosed in the garden of Mr. Phillips, and a chapel converted into a barn, remain. Gwern-y-cleppa park, the next object of our attention on the road, contains a ruin nearly hidden in an interwoven thicket, once the mansion of Ivor-hael (the generous), the pride of bardish song, who flourished in the commencement of the fourteenth century.

We entered TREDEGAR PARK in succession, a very ancient seat of the Morgan family. This park is laid out in the obsolete style of groves and avenues; but possesses great room for

for modern taste, in the variety of swell and hollow composing its surface, the remarkable size and beauty of the oaks and Spanish chesnuts with which it is decorated, and the picturesque course of the rapid Ebwy, whose red rocky banks form a striking contrast to the surrounding verdure. The turnpike road passes through the park, and within a few hundred yards of the mansion, a huge quadrangular brick building, of the date of Charles the Second's reign, with a high shelving roof, in which are two or three tiers of windows, similar to the weighing-house at Amsterdam. Internally, the house is convenient and well arranged, with state and domestic apartments, several of which are preserved in their original character. The most remarkable is the oak room; the flooring of which, forty-two feet by twenty-seven, was furnished by a single oak; and the wainscoting, formed of the same material, is much admired for its antique carving. A large collection of pictures, chiefly family portraits, is distributed through the house; but few of them are valuable as specimens of art. Among the extensive offices are several remains of the ancient castellated mansion,

described

described by Leland as "a very fair place of stone."

The Morgan family being one of the most ancient and considerable in Wales, the ingenuity of the bards has been excited to trace its origin: some have venally derived it from Cam the second son of Noah; but others refute this position, and modestly carry it no further than his third son. Without noticing several intervening personages contended to be the founders of this family, Cadivor the great, lord of Dyfed, who died anno 1084, appears to be the only one well supported in the appointment of its great ancestor.

From Tredegar Park we immediately crossed the Ebwy by a long narrow bridge, and presently entered NEWPORT, a dirty ill-built town nearly comprized in one long street winding down a bank of the river Usk. The eminence on which its church is situated, at the upper part of the town, affords a very fine prospect of the surrounding country; at the extremity of the town appears its ruined castle, watered by the silvery Usk: an intermixture of wood and pasture clothes the surrounding hills and valleys: the wild mountains about Pont-y-pool are strongly contrasted by

by the fertile tract of Wentloog and Caldecot levels, and the noble expanse of the Bristol channel backed by the cultivated hills of Somersetshire. The church exhibits the architecture of several ages: its nave comprehends the original church, which is of the oldest mode of building, and may be considered as of a date prior to the settlement of the Normans: the chancel and ailes are of later architecture. The western doorway, connected with the ancient chapel of St. Mary, now converted into a burying-place, and which was formerly the grand entrance, exhibits a curious specimen of Saxon carving, in a circular archway, with hatched and indented mouldings resting on low columns with capitals of rude foliage. The church contains three ancient monuments; but its chief ornament is the high square embattled tower, built by Henry the Third, in gratitude for the attachment of the townsmen to his cause during his contest with the barons. St. Wooloo, the patron of this spot, is held in high veneration by the natives. He retired from the pride and pageantry of kinghood, to lead a life of prayer and mortification: a lowly cottage was his dwelling; sackcloth

his

his apparel; he lived by the labour of his hands; the crystal rill afforded his only beverage, and barley bread, rendered more disrelishing by a sprinkling of ashes, his constant food. He left this world for better fare in the next about the end of the fifth century.

NEWPORT CASTLE is a ruin of very inconsiderable dimensions: its quadrangular area was only defended by a simple wall, except on the side next the river, where three towers still remain in a nearly intire state. There is an octagon tower at each extremity of this side; a large square one between them, with turrets at each angle, appears to have been the citadel, and contains a vaulted apartment called the state-room; at the bottom of this tower a handsome Gothic arch forms a watergate, which has within it the groove of a portcullis: between this and the further tower was the baronial hall, the ruins of which yet remain. The pointed arches throughout this building testify it to have been a work posterior to the Norman æra; though it is certain, that there was a castle at Newport in 1173, when Owen ap Caradoc, going to treat with king Henry without arms or attendants,

was

was basely murdered by the soldiers of Newport castle. Jowerth ap Owen, his father, in revenge for this treachery, carried fire and sword to the gates of Hereford and Gloucester. Newport was formerly encompassed with a wall; but of this there are no remains; nor of the three gates mentioned by Leland, except some small vestiges of the one next the bridge. A large Gothic building near the castle, with a stone coat of arms over the door, now occupied as a warehouse, was formerly the murringer's * house. In place of an inconvenient wooden bridge, a handsome stone one of five arches has been lately executed by Mr. David Edward, son of the mason of Pont-y-pridd: a canal was also just finished at the time of our visit, reaching from Pont-y-pool, by means of which its brisk and improving trade in coals and iron is much facilitated.

On the banks of the river, a short distance below the bridge, are the remains of a house of preaching friars; consisting of the spacious refectory, part of the church, and other buildings, now converted to private uses.—

* An officer who had the superintendance of the walls, and collected a toll for keeping them in repair.

About

About a mile further southward, near the conflux of the Usk and Ebwy, are the small vestiges of Green castle, once a considerable fortress belonging to the duke of Lancaster, and described by Churchyard, who flourished in the reign of Elizabeth, as

"A goodly seate, a tower, a princely pyle."

We made an excursion on the road to Caerphilly, which embraces several objects not unworthy of notice. About a mile and half from Newport is the Gaer, a large encampment supposed to be Roman, occupying the brow of an eminence near the Ebwy in Tredegar park. A short distance further is the little village of BASSALEG, the approach to which is very picturesque; where the Ebwy appears struggling in its bed of red rocks, and throwing its clear stream over a weir just beneath the bridge: above it rises the church, with its embattled tower finely relieved by intervening foliage. Here, according to Tanner, was a Benedictine priory, a cell to the abbey of Glastonbury; but of this no traces are evident; unless a ruin in the deep recesses of a forest about a mile westward, called Coed-y-Monachty, or the wood of

the monastery, are its remains. On the summit of a hill overgrown with coppice, about a mile from Bassaleg, near the road to Llanvihangel, is a circular encampment called Craeg-y-saesson.

From Bassaleg the country continues undulating and fertile to the vale of Machen, where the Rumney emerges from among wild hills and overhanging forests, and sweeps through the plain: a sprinkling of white cottages enliven the scene, which receives an additional effect from its picturesque church, and the steep acclivity of Machen hill, studded all over with lime-kilns. At the opening of the vale is MACHEN-PLACE, once a respectable seat of the Morgans, but now tottering in decay, and occupied as a farm-house: some memorials of faded grandeur may here be traced in a circular apartment, with a rich stuccoed cieling, called the hunting-room. A pair of Landirons weighing two hundred weight, formerly employed in roasting an entire ox, and an immense oak table, may also convey an idea of the solid fare and plenty of days of yore. We pursued the road no further; but, returning

turning through Newport*, and crossing its bridge, took the road to Caerleon.

Our route soon became uninteresting, and continued a confined and miry avenue; until, arriving at CHRIST-CHURCH, and looking over a hedge opposite to it, when a prospect burst upon us with an electric suddenness, grandly extensive and delightful. From the foreground descended a succession of bold knolls or gentle swells, clothed with ornamental plantations, in a wide display of sylvan beauty, to Caldecot level, whose uniform though fruitful plain was in a great measure concealed by the intervention of contrasting heights. Beyond this, the majestic Severn's

——————— fresh current flow'd
" Against the eastern ray translucent, pure,
" With touch æthereal of Heaven's fiery rod."

Numerous barks diversified its surface; and a large fleet of ships, anchored at King's-road, became a striking object. The high opposite

* We did not visit Rogeston castle, about two miles north-west of Newport, a fortress of the Stradlings who came over with Fitzhammon. Part of its remains appear in the foundation of the mansion built on its site, belonging to the Morgans, but tenanted by Mr. Butler of Caerleon, and employed as a manufactory of iron bolts and tin plates.

shores of Somersetshire either descended in fertile slopes, laid out in pastures and cornfields; or, abruptly disjoined, opposed their cliffs, a naked surface of rock, to the waves. Eastward, over Gloucestershire and the neighbouring counties, such a variety of hills and valleys, verdant lawns and waving woods, embowered hamlets and handsome villas appeared, that the eye was at a loss where to rest for pre-eminent beauty. Light clouds floated in the atmosphere; and the sun, "sparing of light," distributed its rays in partial streaks; but the varied illumination rather heightened than diminished the charms of the picture. We turned from this assemblage of nature's wealth, this delightful landscape, with regret, and descended among the adjoining plantations of Sir Robert Salusbury, Messrs. Sykes, Kemeys, and Philips, towards Caldecot level; a large tract of land, similar to that of Wentloog, rescued from the inroads of the sea by human industry. Near the western extremity of this plain rises the peninsulated promontory of GOLD CLIFF, so called from a glittering yellow mica incorporated with the rock, and which is even now considered by the peasants as indicating a gold

a gold mine. The brow of the cliff was formerly dignified with an opulent priory, founded by Robert de Chandos anno 1113: its small remains are incorporated into a barn, and other buildings of a farm-house.

Returning, we took a hasty view of Christchurch, an ordinary building chiefly Gothic; but a Saxon arch reposing on low columns, which forms the entrance, indicates that the greater part of the present structure is engrafted upon an older foundation. Within, a Gothic screen of exquisite workmanship, separating the chancel from the nave, was formerly much admired; but it is now shamefully injured. A curious sepulchral monument here is deemed miraculous, on the eve of the circumcision, in curing sick children. Formerly the tomb was crowded with the little subjects of credulity, who were bound to remain in contact with the stone during the night; but, the natural agency of a warm bed being found more favourable to convalescence than the miraculous interposition, the fees of the sexton have of late considerably diminished. The public house near the church was the ancient manse.

A descent of alarming steepness led us toward the ancient town of CAERLEON, through its suburb, a long narrow village, still bearing the classical appellation of Ultra Pontem. We crossed the Usk by a narrow wooden bridge with a flooring of loose planks, and immediately entered the town, the Isca Silurum of Antoninus, the station of the second legion, and the principal Roman town in the country of the Silures, now so far diminished as scarcely to occupy one sixth of the area within the Roman walls. It was, however, in a declining state so far back as the fourteenth century, as appears from the following account given by Giraldus: "Many remains "of its former magnificence are still visible. "Splendid palaces, which once emulated "with their gilded roofs the grandeur of "Rome; for it was originally built by the "Roman princes, and adorned with stately "edifices. A gigantic tower; numerous "baths; ruins of a temple and a theatre, "the walls of which are partly standing. "Here we still see, both within and without "the walls, subterraneous buildings, aque-"ducts, and vaulted caverns, and stoves so "excellently

" excellently contrived as to convey their " heat through secret and imperceptible " pores." This description has been followed in a compiled Tour published not long since, and, by an unfortunate mistake, given as its present appearance. Alas! it exhibits a melancholy reverse:

> The cloud-capt towers,
> The gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples,

are dissolved: the town is a poor straggling place; and vestiges of its former magnificence must be curiously sought after to be seen at all. Statues, altars, columns, elegant freizes, sarcophagi, coins and intaglios, have been making their appearance during several ages; but they are immediately carried away by curious persons, or more frequently applied to domestic uses. An altar with a Roman inscription had been dug up just before our arrival, and we were conducted by an obliging gentleman of the town to the garden in which it was found; where we saw the venerable monument of antiquity just finished slicing into half a dozen slabs for paving.

The Roman fortification forms an oblong square, with the corners a little rounded *, and unfurnished with towers. Many fragments of the walls accompanied by the fosse are evident; deprived of the facing-stones, they appear in great masses of grout-work; *i. e.* of stones, broken tiles, and bricks promiscuously bedded in cement. The remains are no where more than fourteen feet high, which is much less than their original elevation, and ten or twelve in thickness. Their circumference does not exceed 1800 yards; but the adjacent fields are continually yielding up foundations, &c. which denote the suburbs to have been very extensive: tradition, indeed, reports them to have been nine miles round. The castle stood between the walls and the river, of which some small vestiges appear at the Hanbury Arms †. At a little distance from this place, on the opposite side of the road, we noticed a high artificial mound about 300 yards in circumference, which is

* In ancient military architecture "*circinatio angulorum*;" a plan condemned by Vitruvius, because it rather sheltered the besiegers than the besieged, "*quia hostem magis tuentur quam civem.*"

† A decent little inn, and the only one in the town.

the

the site of the citadel described by Giraldus as gigantic. The small remains of its walls appear to consist of solid masonry; but this part of the fortification is, no doubt, posterior to the rest, and was most likely erected by the Normans.

The house of Miss Morgan, formerly a Cistercian abbey, has been entirely new-faced with squared stones collected from the ruins of Caerleon, as have also many others in the town. This lady has collected several Roman coins, and has other curiosities in her possession that we would gladly have examined, and were offered an introduction for that purpose; but our way-worn apparel (a false shame, if the reader insist upon it) was an obstacle in our way of accepting it. Other Roman vestiges appear in the market-house of Caerleon, which is supported by four massive Tuscan pillars. Immediately without the town, and adjoining Miss Morgan's premises, is the Roman amphitheatre, commonly called Arthur's round table. It is an oval concavity, seventy-four yards by sixty-four, and six deep; in which are ranges of stone seats, though now covered with earth and verdure. The foundation of its encircling

circling walls was met with on digging in the year 1706, when a statue of Diana and two ornamental pedestals were also discovered.

In the neighbourhood of Caerleon are several encampments that were probably used for airing the troops in summer. The most remarkable are, that of the Lodge, occupying a hill in the park of Lantarnam, about a mile north-west of Caerleon; the one of Penros, a short distance to the left of the road to Usk; that at Mayndee, near Christ-church; and a fourth in the wood of St. Julian's, towards Newport. Near the latter spot a chapel of high antiquity, dedicated to St. Julius, is now used as a barn. But St. Julian's is more remarkable for a Gothic mansion, once the residence of the ingenious, valiant, and vain lord Herbert of Cherbury.

Edward, first lord Herbert of Cherbury, was born anno 1581: his infancy was remarkable for mental and bodily weakness; but he soon became distinguished as a scholar and a valiant knight. Most of the living languages and every elegant accomplishment engaged his study. We learn from the history of his life, written by himself (in which he is considered to be the most chivalrous, learned,

learned, handsome, discerning, and wonderful gentleman that ever figured in story), that at fifteen he took to himself a wife; and being a few years afterwards presented at court, his love-inspiring attractions excited the rusty passions of Elizabeth, then seventy years of age.—"The queen," says the noble biographer, "looked attentively upon me, "and *swearing her ordinary oath*, said, "It is pity he was married so young," and "thereupon gave me her hand to kiss twice; "both times gently clapping me on the "cheek." The consorts of Lewis the Thirteenth and James the First were still more fascinated by this mighty conqueror of hearts, who excited jealousy even in the breast of royalty! Many enamoured dames of the court wearing his picture in their bosoms brought him in hourly danger of assassination from their enraged husbands: yet his miraculous courage and address ensured victory in every encounter. Among numerous excellencies that distinguished his clay from the common material of mortality, the noble lord declares, "it is well known to them "that wait in my chamber, that the shirts, "waistcoats, and other garments I wear next

" my body, are sweet beyond what either " can be believed or hath been observed in " any body else; which sweetness was also " found to be in my breath before I used " to take tobacco." With all this extravagance, which may be set to the account of old age, often vain and garrulous, Lord Herbert may be justly considered one of the first characters of the age and country in which he lived.

LANTARNAM house and park, situated about a mile and a half from Caerleon, near the road from Newport to Pont-y-pool, occupy the site of a rich Cistercian abbey. The mansion is a neglected gloomy structure, which appears to have been erected about the reign of Elizabeth, and chiefly out of the materials of the abbey. A large Gothic gateway and the monks cells, now converted into stabling, are vestiges of the parent building.

The accounts that we had collected of Pont-y-pool did not incline us to abandon the line of our tour to visit it. The town, sufficiently large and populous, yet blackened by neighbouring coal and iron works, and situated in a dreary region only rich in mineral treasure, would hardly prove interesting but

to

to those concerned in its traffic. Its first consequence arose from a manufacture of japanned ware invented in the time of Charles the Second, which remained a long time peculiar to the town, but is now generally understood. In its immediate vicinity Pont-y-pool Park, the seat of Hanbury Leigh, Esq. forms a conspicuous ornament, and is described by Mr. Coxe as possessing a good collection of pictures.

Our road from Caerleon to Usk, leaving the house and encampment of Penros on the left, led up an ascent from which we had an interesting view of the surrounding district. A narrow valley winds round the base of the eminence watered by the Usk. The opposite boundary of the valley sustained the woods of Kemey's and Bertholly; and in the contrary direction the eye ranges over the venerable groves of Lantarnam, and a wavy intervening country to the distant mountains near Abergavenny. Within two miles of Usk we entered LANGIBBY, a small village, only to be noticed for an ancient mansion of the Williams's family near it. This structure, attributed to the erection of Inigo Jones, contains no distinguishing points of

of architecture; but the house and grounds command delightful views, which receive no inconsiderable interest from the local possession of a majestic ruin. LANGIBBY CASTLE rears its mouldering battlements on the brow of a bold hill, completely overspread with wood. We have no certain accounts when this castle was built; but the pointed arches that occur throughout the ruin denote its erection to have been posterior to the first settlement of the Normans in these parts. It formerly belonged to the Clares Earls of Gloucester; but has been upwards of two centuries in the family of the present possessor. Of this line was Sir Trevor Williams, a zealous supporter of the parliamentary cause in the civil wars, when Langibby castle was spoken of by Cromwell as a fortress of strength and importance.

Our approach to Usk was traced through its vale on a bank of the river, and beneath a high hill entirely shaded with wood: close to our left appeared the whitened Gothic church of Lanbadock: but the handsome bridge of Usk, the antique town and ivy-mantled castle, formed more interesting objects in successive distances; while, afar off, the

the varied line of the mountains near Abergavenny, the craggy summit of the Skyridd, and the abrupt cone of the Sugar-loaf, contrasting the lofty even swell of the Blorenge, presented a terminating line of the most picturesque description. This distance alone was illumined by the sun; for the evening drew to a close, and all our home view was wrapt in one grand shadow.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

USK CASTLE AND CHURCH—EXCURSION TO RAGLAN—ELEGANT RUINS OF RAGLAN CASTLE—VIEWS FROM THE DEVAUDON—ROMAN ANTIQUITIES AT CAERWENT—TESSELATED PAVEMENT.

USK, supposed to be the Burrium of the Romans, occupies a flat situation on the banks of its river. Though now a small place, in great part untenanted and falling to ruin *, it was formerly of very considerable extent. The form and dimensions of its ancient boundary may be traced in an imperfect rampart among the adjoining fields and orchards. The figure is not oblong, as most Roman works of the kind were, but irregularly rectilinear. On a gentle eminence in the northern

* These ruins are attributed to the ravages of Owen Glendower, who sacked and burnt the town.

precinct

precinct of the town is the castle, famous in history for withstanding many a fierce assault; but the ruin has little picturesque attraction: such parts as are not converted to the domestic purposes of a farm-yard are so enveloped in ivy, as scarcely to afford a characterizing form externally. We entered the castle through a Gothic gateway: vestiges of the baronial hall appear on the east side; and some of the towers, with round arched apertures, seem of the earliest construction: but we have no certain accounts when the castle was founded.

Not far from the castle is the church, still a large structure, though much contracted from its original extent. The tower, in which circular arches are introduced, is the oldest part of the edifice; the body of the church is Gothic. This church belonged to a Benedictine priory of five nuns; and part of the priory-house is now standing, a little southward of the church, in the occupation of a farmer. The common prison, a Gothic building near the bridge, was formerly a Roman Catholic chapel *.

There

* From Usk to Abergavenny, the road passes several objects worthy of a tourist's notice. I must here borrow from

There are several ancient encampments in the neighbourhood of Usk. That of Craeg-y-garcyd, crowning a woody precipice on the west side of the river, about a mile above the town, is supposed by Harris to be Roman. Its figure is very irregular, and remarkable for seven very large tumuli within the rampart. About two miles from Usk, in our way to Raglan, we passed Campwood on our left,

Mr. Coxe's survey, not having travelled on the road. The church of Kemys Commander, between three and four miles from Usk, to the left of the road, is a small Gothic structure; its cemetery is remarkable for a hollow yew-tree, fifteen feet in girth, within which is inclosed an oak not less than seven feet in circumference; its branches shadow the parent trunk, forming a singular combination of foliage. The church of Bettus Newydd, on the right of the road in the same neighbourhood, is noticeable for the entire state of its ancient rood-loft. A mile and a half further the road is graced with an elegant Gothic gateway, of modern execution, appertaining to Clytha house, the seat of William Jones, Esq.; and near it is Clytha castle, a structure erected by Mr. Jones to the memory of a beloved wife. At seven miles from Usk, to the right of the road, is the old mansion of Lansanfread, a residence of James Green, Esq. M. P. for Arundel. Colebrook, about two miles further, and nearly the same distance from Abergavenny, is a seat of Sir John Hanbury Williams. The house was an irregular old pile, with square towers at each angle, until about fifty years since, when the present front and Doric portico were erected, from a design of Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, of diplomatic and facetious memory.

another

another encampment, of an oval figure, entirely covered with wood, but not remarkable either in its situation or construction.

Our ride to Raglan traversed a bold undulating country of uncommon richness, where the luxuriance of the soil was alike conspicuous in impervious woods or teeming orchards sweeping over the hills, and verdant meadows sweetly carpeting the vallies.

> " When morn, her rosy steps in th' eastern clime
> " Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl,"

we began our journey; and this range of fertility but disclosed itself in partial gleams through the exhaling dew, as we ascended a hill from Usk. Advancing, the mists disappeared, and we quickly found ourselves in a sequestered valley, whose high encircling hills were variously decorated with a profusion of wood: the morning sun brilliantly shone on the dewy verdure; and we were admiring the charming scenery, while our spirits partook of its cheerfulness, when a huntsman's horn resounded from a neighbouring thicket, and echoed through the hills: a deep-mouthed pack, joining in full chorus, announced a *throwing-off*. The concert con-

tinued, though the performers remained unseen as we anxiously skirted the dale; but our road soon took an ascent, in the precise direction of the hunt; and, gaining an eminence, a new vale and its accompanyments opened to us, yet without the hunting party. However, we had not long gazed in disappointment when, from the dark umbrage of a thick wood, the hounds rushed forward like a wave over the meadows; the men and horses were not far behind; but, scouring a descent that would have scared a lowland sportsman, pursued the game, which continued out of sight. But at length we saw Reynard skulk from a ditchy fence in a field before us, and dash across the meadows: the hounds and hunters were close at his heels. A loud shout from the party, a superior yell in the dogs, and the strained exertions of the animal, proclaimed a general view: we heartily joined in the halloo; and even our sorry jades displayed unusual spirit; for they pricked up their ears, and absolutely began a gallop to join in the chase; but a gate near a yard high opposed an insurmountable obstacle to that intention, and obliged us to remain inactive spectators while the

J. T. Barber delin.

J. Bluck sculp.

Raglan Castle

the party veered up a woody hill and finally disappeared from us.

Reluctantly parting from this animating scene, we entered the little village of RAGLAN; where an old woman, knitting at the door of her cottage, proffered her service to take care of our horses while we walked over a fallow field to the superb ruins of RAGLAN CASTLE.

The approach led up a gentle eminence; but a screen of high elms and thick underwood, issuing from the moat, intervened between us and the castle, which remained concealed, until, penetrating the thicket, a display of the ruin burst upon us, elegantly beautiful! Sweetly picturesque! No theatrical scene was ever designed in a happier taste, or unfolded itself to admiring beholders with a more sudden and impressive effect. In this *coup d'œil*, the Gothic portal and two elegant embattled towers immediately arrested the eye. Of the polygonal towers that formerly defended the entrance, one is completely hidden in a majestic mantle of ivy, which descends in a profuse festoon over the gateway. The other, admirably contrasting, and in a most perfect state of pre-

servation, rears its beautiful machicolated summit with scarcely any leafy incumbrance: yet a few tasteful tufts of ivy sparingly issue from the windows and oillets of the tower, and wave their elegant tendrils over the glistening polish of the walls*. Another tower of similar beauty, but superior dimensions, appears a little further, at the eastern angle of the structure. On the other side of the porch, the ruins are concealed by a profuse pile of ivy; but some lofty portions of the ruin start from the verdure with considerable elegance; and two windows, standing one over the other, exhibit an effect of ornamental relief in their freizes and mouldings that would not discredit any age.

From this assemblage of beautiful objects we fixed our attention on the massive citadel, placed rather obliquely in front of the ornamented ruins. One half of this structure was blown up by order of Cromwell, upon the

* The walls here and in many other parts of the ruin are not deprived of their facing stones, as is generally the case with these remaining monuments of baronial splendour; but, constructed of a superior sort of light grey stone, they still exhibit a specimen of exquisite masonry; and where they have not been wilfully dilapidated appear as perfect as if just finished.

taking

taking of the castle by Fairfax: from the remaining section it appears to have been a hexagonal building of five stories, whose sides were flanked by semicircular bastions covering each angle. The citadel is surrounded by a moat and terrace, with a wall, in which appear niches, once adorned with statues of the Roman emperors. The rough and threatening aspect of these broken walls, and the ponderous bulk of disjointed fragments, falling in the same point of view with the gentle and decorative parts just described, strongly contrast each other, and heighten the varied character of the picture.

This charming *morçeau* was illumined by a morning sun, which shone direct on the marble-like surface of the towers, bringing forward all their elegance of form and enrichment with decisive superiority. The secondary objects of the ruin, overhung with ivy, and denied the direct light of the sun, retired in a low tint; but at the left extremity of the picture, the craggy and advancing citadel caught some of the strongest lights and shades, forming an admirable bit of foreground to the piece. Although I am of opinion, that by a morning light this subject is

seen by far to the greatest advantage, yet treated with an afternoon effect, by the judicious pencil of Sir Richard Hoare, it has formed a charming picture. This View the engraver has ably transmitted to the publick in Mr. Coxe's Survey of Monmouthshire.

Delighted with this first view, we traversed the porch defended by two portcullisses, and entered the principal court of the castle. The interior wore the same style of magnificence that we so much admired without. In superior grandeur projected the great window of the hall, majestically canopied with ivy; a variegated verdure covered the once-paved area, and climbed the lofty sides of the ruin. In some places the fondling ivy ran through the forsaken chambers, and embowered the apertures of the windows; while in many shadowy recesses, where the early sun had not penetrated, the dewy spangles of morning still decorated the dwarfy ash, or tremulously bedecked the waving thistle. So admirably were the different parts disposed, so picturesquely relieved, that the whole seemed rather a fairy creation, than the fortuitous combination of undirected nature.

After

After enjoying these general effects, we proceeded to examine the apartments of the castle. These do not in any part seem of very remote erection, but appear to have been constructed at different periods between the ages of Henry the Fifth and Elizabeth; yet, though a disunion of style be visible to the Antiquary, no discordance of effect arises in any instance. Of the first court, the principal entrance, and a range of once elegant rooms, occupy the south side; the baronial hall, and some other noble apartments, fill up the western part of the court; the culinary and other domestic offices, with the servants habitations, appear to have occupied the north and east sides: at the angle of their junction, a pentagonal tower contained the kitchen, and a small projection on the east side was the oven. A broken flight of steps afforded us the means of ascent to the superior apartments, where we admired the works of our fore-fathers in some lightly-ornamented chimney-pieces and Gothic mouldings. The baronial hall has suffered less from time than from the pilfering attempts of the neighbourhood: some traces of its former grandeur may be seen in its stately dimensions;

dimensions; a prodigious fire-place; and a few remnants of ornament, including the stone-sculptured arms of the Marquis of Worcester, at one end of the hall: this place, once the scene of banqueting and splendour, is now used as a fives-court. Here a fresh instance might be collected of the fleeting state of sublunary greatness; but so many have been brought forward by the great geniusses of all ages, while every little one feels the truth without benefiting by the knowledge, that we will not stop to enlarge on so hopeless a subject; but proceed, where barons bold have often trod, through the western portal of the hall to the chapel. Few vestiges remain of this structure; but some of its springing arches, rising from grotesque heads, are imperfectly visible; and two whole-length figures, coarsely executed, appear through the thick-woven ivy. From this place we entered the area of the second court, once adorned with a marble fountain and an equestrian statue; but now planted with fruit-trees: this court is surrounded by a range of secondary yet capital apartments.

The subterraneous appendages of the castle are uncommonly extensive, according with the

the great plan of the building; eastward of which is the grange and out-houses, now converted into a farming habitation.—Raglan Castle was one of the latest that held out for the royal cause against Cromwell; and the intrenchments raised for its defence, and against it, may be readily traced in the adjoining fields *.

Returning

* List of the household, and method of living, at Raglan Castle, by the Earl of Worcester, in the reign of Charles the First, 1641.

At eleven o'clock in the forenoon the castle gates were shut, and the tables laid; two in the dining-room; three in the hall; one in Mrs. Watson's apartment, where the chaplains eat (Sir Toby Matthews being the first); and two in the housekeeper's room, for the ladies' women.

The Earl entered the dining-room, attended by his gentlemen. As soon as he was seated, Sir Ralph Blackstone, steward of the house, retired. The comptroller, Mr. Holland, attended with his staff, as did the sewer Mr. Blackburne; the daily waiters, Mr. Clough, Mr. Selby, Mr. Scudamore; and many gentlemen's sons, with estates from two to seven hundred pounds a year, who were bred up in the castle; my lady's gentlemen of the chamber, Mr. Morgan and Mr. Fox. At the first table sat the noble family, and such of the nobility as came there.

At the second table, in the dining-room, sat knights and honourable gentlemen attended by footmen.

In the hall, at the first table, sat Sir Ralph Blackstone, steward; the comptroller, Mr. Holland; the secretary; the master of the Horse, Mr. Dolowar; the master of the Fish-

ponds,

Returning from this interesting ruin, we passed Raglan church, a small Gothic building, containing a few mutilated monuments of the Beaufort and Worcester families; and proceeded on the turnpike-road to Chepstow.

Our route soon took a long and laborious as-

ponds, Mr. Andrews; my Lord Herbert's preceptor, Mr. Adams; with such gentlemen as came there under the degree of a knight, attended by footmen, and plentifully served with wine.

At the second table in the hall (served from my Lord's table, and with other hot meats) sat the sewer, with the gentlemen waiters and pages, to the number of twenty-four.

At the third table, in the hall, sat the clerk of the kitchen, with the yeomen officers of the house, two grooms of the chamber, &c.

Other officers of the household were, chief auditor, Mr. Smith; clerk of the accounts, George Whithorn; purveyor of the castle Mr. Salisbury; ushers of the hall, Mr. Moyle and Mr. Cooke; closet-keeper; gentleman of the chapel, Mr. Davies; keeper of the records; master of the wardrobe; master of the armoury; master grooms of the stable for the war-horses, twelve; master of the hounds; master falconer; porter and his man. Two butchers; two keepers of the home-park; two keepers of the red-deer park. Footmen, grooms, and other menial servants, to the number of 150. Some of the footmen were brewers and bakers.

Out Officers: Steward of Raglan, William Jones, Esq.; the governor of Chepstow Castle, Sir Nicholas Kemys, Bart.; housekeeper of Worcester-house in London, James Redman, Esq.; thirteen Bailiffs; two counsel for the bailiffs to have recourse to; solicitor, Mr. John Smith.

cent,

cent, from the summit of which we obtained an extensive view over the middle parts of Monmouthshire, an undulating tract of uncommon fertility and high cultivation. The line of distant mountains that we admired in the approach to Usk, here appeared strongly diversified and singularly picturesque, with the continuous ridge of the Black mountains to the west. Another considerable height about three miles further commanded a similar view; from which a short ride led us to the summit of the DEVAUDON; a remarkable elevation, whence a prodigious view is ordinarily obtained, not only over the country northward, but in the opposite direction, over the Bristol channel and its opposing shores. A severe shower, however, obliged us to relinquish this view, and seek shelter beneath the boughs of Chepstow park, as we branched off on the turnpike towards Caerwent.

Upon the storm abating, we wound down the Devaudon, and descended into an agreeable valley, whose opposite hills were clothed with wild forest-trees: the decayed town of Share Newton occupied the summit of a high hill bordering the vale in the direction of our route. We passed through

this

this town (a mere collection of cottages), and about half way towards the village of Crick turned off the road to visit Wrunston, an ecclesiastical ruin concealed in a sequestered thicket. The picturesque remnant of a small chapel is the only part standing; but extensive foundations and broad causeways declare the place to have been once considerable.—From Crick, a genteel village, we proceeded over an old Roman causeway * to Caerwent, the Venta Silurum of the Romans.

CAERWENT occupies a gently-inclining plane in a low situation. A few small dwellings mark the site of the ancient town; the fortifications of which form an oblong paralellogram, whose width is equal to two-ninths of its length, with the corners a little rounded; a frequent figure in Roman military works, called *Terriata castra*. The cor-

* The Romans constructed their roads with large masses of stone closely layed together: each piece was often six or seven feet long and carefully squared. The road to Caerwent, formed on such a foundation, though passing through a low swampy country, is observed to be uncommonly compact and dry. Thus the utility of that once great people's work is transmitted through the constant wear of fifteen centuries; and excites the admiration of even our own enlightened age.

ners

ners of the walls nearly correspond with the four cardinal points. On the south-west side are three pentagonal bastions; from which circumstance some authors have conjectured the erection of the town to have taken place under the lower empire, as flanking projections were not in use before that period; but it is justly supposed to be equally probable, that they were added after the general embattlement. The circuit of the rampart, near a mile in extent, may still be traced, in most places surrounded by a deep moat; the wall is constructed of grout-work faced with squared lime-stone; but the facings have been for the most part removed for private uses. From the present ruinous state of the walls, we cannot speak with certainty of their former height; but it appears to have varied considerably; perhaps eighteen feet may be a good medium: they are about twelve feet in thickness at their base, and nine at top. A fragment of the wall, nearly twenty feet in length and twelve high, has fallen near the southern angle; and, although the ponderous ruin revolved in its fall, the mass remains unshattered and impenetrable. Such is the boundary of a spot once crowded with palaces

and

and temples: at present, the church and parsonage, a farm-house, a public-house, and a few scattered cottages, chiefly built with squared stones of the Roman town, are the only buildings on the area, which is generally laid out in fields and orchards. But ancient foundations, projecting above the level, and concealed under green hillocks, rise in many places; and elegant columns, tesselated pavements, and coins, are continually met with in ploughing and digging.

We saw a tesselated or mosaic pavement, that was formerly much admired, in an orchard behind the farm-house; which is thus described by Mr. Wyndham in his tour, performed between thirty and forty years since: "The pavement is in length twenty-one feet "six inches, and in breadth eighteen feet. "A border, edged with the Greek scroll and "fret, surrounds the whole; but on the "north side, the border, being upwards of "three feet, is much broader than the other "side. This was designed in order to reduce "the circles within a square. These circles "are about three feet in diameter, and are "encircled with a variety of elegant orna-"ments, and separated from each other by

" regular and equal distances. I think there " are thirteen of these circles. The pieces " of which the pavement is composed are " nearly square, the breadth of them being " about the size of a common die. These " are of various colours, blue, white, yel- " low, and red; the first and second are of " stone, and the yellow and red are of terra " cotta. By a judicious mixture of these " colours, the whole pattern is as strongly " described as it would have been in oil co- " lours. The original level is perfectly pre- " served; and the whole composition is so " elegant and well executed, that I think it " has not been surpassed by any mosaic " pavement that has been discovered on this, " or even on the other side of the Alps. In " my opinion, it is equal to those beautiful " pavements which are preserved in the pa- " lace of the king of Naples at Portice. I " am strongly inclined to think that it is of " the same age of Agricola." On this pavement being discovered, a building was erected to shelter it from the weather, by order of the proprietor, Mr. Lewis, of St. Pierre; but the brewhouse wanted a roof, and this, being found of similar dimensions, was transferred

to the brewhouse; the farmer holding his ale in much greater veneration than relics of antiquity. In consequence of neglect, this curiosity is no longer an object of beauty; exposed to the weather, the surface became broken up; every one being allowed to take away as many of the *tesseræ* as he pleased; but a small portion remains; and that is so overgrown with grass as to be with difficulty distinguished. In this orchard, and near the southern extremity of the wall, is a mound, which is most probably the site of the exploratory, or watch-tower.

CHAP. XV.

WENTWOOD FOREST—EXCURSION TO THE CASTLES OF DINHAM; LANVAIR; STRIGUIL; PENCOED; AND PENHOW—COMPRISING EXTENSIVE VIEWS FROM THE PENCAMAWR, &c. — CALDECOT CASTLE—A TALE OF OTHER TIMES—NEW PASSAGE — SUDBROOK ENCAMPMENT—AND CHAPEL — ST. PIERRE — MATHERN PALACE—MOINSCOURT.

HAVING satisfied ourselves with the antiquities of Caerwent, we planned an excursion, to comprise the six castles mentioned by the author of "Secret Memoirs of Monmouthshire" as surrounding the forest of WENTWOOD. These were erected soon after the Normans established themselves in Monmouthshire, in order to keep the natives in check, who were wont to sally from their

impenetrable fastnesses in the woods, and take a severe revenge on their conquerors and oppressors. Great part of this forest still exists in its original wildness, although it has been considerably curtailed by late enclosures. The castles enumerated are, Dinham, Penhow, Pencoed, Lanvasches, Lanvair, and Castrogy or Striguil. On a bridle-road, extending to Share Newton, we proceeded to the village of DINHAM, a poor place consisting of a few farm-houses and cottages: we had some difficulty in discovering the ruins of its castle, which consist of some low walls obscured by trees; merely pointing out its site on a gentle eminence near the borders of the forest. The ruin is called in the neighbourhood the old chapel. There being nothing here to fix our attention, we made the best of our way to LANVAIR CASTLE, situated on a small rise about two miles from Caerwent, near the road to Usk. In our approach to the ruin, an effect caught through intervening trees was pleasing and picturesque; but the ruin aspires not to grandeur, and is in a great degree concealed by embowering verdure: a nearer inspection of the castle increased our opinion of its former

extent and prowess; large foundations are evident; and the walls are nowhere less than seven feet in thickness: a square and two round towers are the most conspicuous features of the ruin, which is in part moulded into a farm-house: the area of the principal court is employed as a kitchen-garden. Beneath the castellated eminence is the village-church, a simple rustic building; passing which, and proceeding on the road to Usk, we quickly entered the forest of Wentwood. In this tract a dreary ride among dark woods, and russet heaths, laboriously ascending, brought us to the PENCAMAWR summit; a remarkable eminence in the long ridge of hills crossing the midland parts of Monmouthshire, from the vicinity of Caerleon to the banks of the Wye near Landago.

Here a prospect greatly extensive opened to us. Beyond the wild region prevailing about our eminence, broken into a rapid succession of high hills and deep valleys, the winding Usk, with its emeraldic valley, accompanied with numerous villas and rich hanging woods, appeared in all its beauty. The bold character of the foreground, soon melting into a gentle undulation, displayed a

scene of cultivation and productiveness of great extent; while, afar off, the line of distant mountains about Abergavenny, which we had before admired, again presented itself; somewhat varied, but not diminished in excellence. Nor was the view southward less extensive, comprehending a great part of the Bristol channel, with its receding coast.

Slowly proceeding down a steep declivity, and admiring the prospect before us, we soon reached STRIGUIL, or TROGGY CASTLE, as it is generally called, standing in a marshy field at the bottom of the hill. The small remains of this fortress are so profusely overspread with ivy, and the pendent foliage of wide-branching trees, that an accurate judgement can scarcely be formed of its architecture: but where the structure can be seen, pointed arches with neat facings appear throughout; from which circumstance the accuracy of Leland and Camden may be questioned, who date the erection of this castle prior to the Conquest: certainly the parts now standing were not constructed within a century subsequent to that event. An octagon tower and some broken walls are the only standing parts of the ruin; but the form

form of its area may be traced, which is oblong, with towers defending each angle, and a broad moat surrounding the whole.

Reascending the Pencamawr, a ride of four or five miles, upon the site of a British way that led from Cardiff to Monmouth, brought us into the turnpike-road between Newport and Caerwent. In this interesting progress, on the ridgy summit of the high hills bordering the Usk, our prospects were delightful. Occasionally excluded by the close thickets of the forest, and re-appearing under different circumstances, new scenes were continually creating; and that satiety in consequence avoided which would possibly have resulted from the long possession of one species of scene, however excellent. Not far distant from the Pencamawr, appear the antiquated mansion, the hanging groves, and dark mantling woods of Bertholly, impendent near the limpid Usk, which here makes one of its boldest curves, forming nearly a complete circle in its romantic meander. About two miles further, in a field on the right of the road, is a building called Kemys Folly; from the summit of which, a range of prospect is obtained, scarcely to be equalled

for extent and diversity. The views described from the Pencamawr here appear, with all the added charms of the scenery of the Usk, in this part eminently beautiful: from this spot also the Bristol channel displays its silvery surface with uncommon effect; while the distant shores of Somerset and Devon follow its course in bay and promontory, until the receding confine, too remote for the distinction of sight, appears dissolved in the blue ethereal.

From these charming scenes we descended, and in a short time left the British way, in joining the Newport turnpike near a public-house called Cat's Ash. This road is for the most part constructed on the Julia strata of the Romans. Where it leaves the absolute site of the ancient road it closely follows its course, and the foundation of the causeway may be traced in the adjoining fields; particularly in a meadow near the spot, where a lane from Lanvair to Caldecot level crosses the turnpike. Proceeding on this road somewhat more than a mile, we turned off into a bridle-road on our right, to inspect the remains of PENCOED CASTLE and manor-house. These ruins are situated on the extreme boundary of that hilly tract bordering Caldecot level, over which

which and the Bristol channel it commands a comprehensive view. Of the castle very inconsiderable vestiges appear, in a gateway with a circular arch and two small pentagonal turrets, a round embattled tower, and some dilapidated walls; yet, decorated with a profusion of verdure, the ruin, though small, is picturesque and pleasing. The architecture of these fragments is of a more distant date than most of the small castles in Monmouthshire, and may be considered coëval with the first establishment of the Normans in Gwent, *i. e.* Monmouthshire. The mansion, occupying the site of the baronial fortress, built with its materials and engrafted on its foundation, is of an architectural date between Henry the Eighth's reign and that of Elizabeth. This neglected edifice is now partly occupied as a farm-house; but indications of its former importance appear in the grand dimensions of the apartments, and the great general extent of the building.

Upon regaining the high road, we soon approached PENHOW CASTLE, seated on an eminence, and commanding the pass of a wild hollow beneath: a square embattled tower is the leading feature of this ruin, which

which is very inconsiderable, and chiefly converted into a small farming habitation:

" There in the ruin, heedless of the dead,
" The shelter-seeking peasant builds his shed;
" And, wond'ring man could want the larger pile,
" Exults, and owns his cottage with a smile.

Thus having surveyed five out of the six castles that formerly surrounded the forest of Wentwood, and learning that no traces remained of the fortress at Lanvasches, we returned to Caerwent from a circuit of about twenty miles.

At an early hour in the morning we set out from our lowly quarters at Caerwent, and traversed a fruitful country, pleasingly varied with wood and pastures, in our way to CALDECOT CASTLE. The situation of this ruin in an undiversified swampy plain, is not calculated to set off its importance: viewed from a superior elevation in the approach, the towers and citadel, in themselves sufficiently high, appear sunk, and undistinguished from the curtain wall of the fortification; but on a nearer inspection the ruin rises in consequence; and the aspect of its chief entrance, a large Gothic gateway guarded by two massive projecting towers, is truly noble. The light grey masonry

masonry of this entrance is agreeably relieved by a profusion of ivy, overspreading nearly the whole of one tower, and throwing the broad shadow of its pendent foliage upon part of the other. Within the portal the grooves of two portcullisses are apparent; and a further means of defence is visible in holes through the arch, down which boiling lead might be poured on the heads of the besiegers. On entering the court some remains of the baronial hall, and the foundations of other buildings, appear within the area of the walls. A small artificial mount at the north-east angle of the ruin sustains the citadel, a lofty round tower; to which *dernier resort* of the garrison a ready communication seems to have been conducted on the walls, from the different towers and other parts of the fortress; the whole of which is surrounded by a broad and deep moat.

The early history of this castle is uncertain: some have conjectured that part of it was built by Harold; and indeed a round tower on the south-west side of the castle, with a circularly arched entrance, has a Saxon character; but the general architecture of the building is Gothic. Caldecot castle,

in the different accounts of Monmouthshire, has been attached to the lord high constableship of England, upon the authority of Camden*; but it appears very satisfactorily, from Mr. Coxe's illustration, that it was the *private* property of the great Bohun family possessing the earldom of Hereford, who were hereditary constables of England. Caldecot church is an extensive and highly-ornamented Gothic structure, which may appear somewhat disproportioned to the scanty flock that it has to fold.

Leaving the little village of Caldecot, we passed the Nevern brook, and soon after the small hamlet of Portswit, formerly washed by the sea, though it has since receded upwards of a mile. This place brought to our recollection a tale of outrage and cruelty that strongly characterizes the state of society at the time, and may serve as a buoy to mark the lawless violence of military dominion. It is related in Powell's translation of Caradoc's history, that Harold, after wresting part of Prince Gryffith's possessions from him, built a magnificent palace at Portascyth (Portswit)

* Camden's Britannia, p. 714, ed 1722.

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in Monmouthshire; "and, stowing it with "a great quantity of provision, splendidly en- "tertained the king, who honoured him "with a visit. This was by no means "pleasing to Tosty, to see his younger bro- "ther in greater esteem and favour with the "king than himself; and, having concealed "his displeasure for a time, he could not "forbear at length but discover his grievance; "for one day at Windsor, while Harold "reached the cup to King Edward, Tosty, "ready to burst with envy that his brother "was so much respected beyond himself, "could not refrain to run furiously upon "him, and, pulling him by the hair, "dragged him to the ground; for which "unmannerly action the king forbade him "the court. But he, with continued ran- "cour and malice, rides to Hereford, where "Harold had many servants preparing an en- "tertainment for the king; and, setting upon "them with his followers, lopped off the "hands and legs of some, the arms and "heads of others, and then threw them into "the butts of wine and other liquors which "were put in for the king's drinking; and "at his departure charged the servants to ac-

"quaint

" quaint him, ' that of other fresh meat he " might carry with him what he pleased; " but for sauce he should find plenty pro- " vided for him.' For which barbarous of- " fence the king pronounced perpetual ba- " nishment upon him. But Caradoc ap " Gryffydth gave a finishing stroke to Ha- " rold's house, and the king's entertainment " at Portascyth; for, coming thither shortly " after Tosty's departure, to be revenged " upon Harold, he killed all the workmen " and labourers, with all the servants he " could find; and, utterly defacing the " building, carried away all the costly ma- " terials, which, with great charges and ex- " pence, had been brought thither to beau- " tify and adorn the structure."

Proceeding through an agreeable undulating tract towards the sea-shore, we soon arrived at the NEW PASSAGE, the principal entrance into Monmouthshire from the south-western counties *. The breadth of water from this place to the Bristol coast is three miles

* About half a mile from the shore is a rocky islet called Charston rock, much esteemed for the durability of its stone: it has lately been employed in the lower part of the piers of Newport-bridge.

and

and a half, while the ferry of Aust, or the Old passage, four or five miles higher up the Severn, is only two miles across; but this advantage is considered to be overbalanced by the more commodious landing at the former. Both these concerns, being monopolies, are, like all other monopolies, hostile to the interest of the publick; for there being no competition for preference between the boatmen, they are extremely rude in their manners, indifferent to the accommodation of the publick, and by no means unpractised in various arts of extortion. But these exclusive privileges have existed from time immemorial. The title of the New Passage arose from its renewal in the year 1718, after an abolition in consequence of the following remarkable incident.

Charles the First, being pursued by a strong party of his enemies through Share Newton, got into a boat at the Black rock (the New passage), and was ferried to the opposite shore. His pursuers, to the number of sixty, with drawn swords compelled other boatmen belonging to the passage to ferry them after him; but these, being in the king's interest, landed them on a reef of rocks in the Severn called the English

English stones, near the Gloucestershire coast, to which they were instructed to ford: indeed, the strait was fordable at low water; but, the tide flowing in very rapidly, they were all drowned in the attempt, and the king for that time escaped. Cromwell, informed of the transaction, abolished the ferry; nor was it renewed, until after a long chancery-suit between an ancestor of the present proprietor, Mr. Lewis, of St. Pierre, and the guardians of his Grace the Duke of Beaufort, proprietor of Aust ferry.

A walk of a mile, on the shore westward of New Passage inn, led us to SUDBROOK ENCAMPMENT, crowning the brow of an eminence which rises in an abrupt cliff from Caldecot level. This work, consisting of three ramparts and two ditches, forms a semicircle, whose chord is the sea cliff; but it is evident, that part of the eminence has mouldered away; and most probable, that the figure of the fortification was once circular. Harris conjectures it to be of Roman origin, and intended for the defence of the port of Venta Silurum (Caerwent). Eastward of the encampment is SUDBROOK CHAPEL, a small Gothic ruin, which was formerly attached

to

to a mansion of Norman foundation. No traces appear even of the site of this structure, which has in all likelihood been swept away by the encroachment of the sea: but several piles of hewn stones near the ramparts are probably its relics.

We had another pleasant walk of about a mile from the New passage across the fields to ST. PIERRE, an ancient residence of the Lewis family, descended from Cadivor the great. This mansion exhibits rather an incongruous mixture, in which the modern refinements of sash-windows, &c. are forced upon a Gothic structure upwards of four hundred years old: an embattled gateway, flanked with pentagonal towers, is still more ancient, and is recorded as having belonged to the feudal castle that occupied the site of the present building.

Nearly opposite this spot, the great estuary of the Bristol channel, contracting in width, takes the name of the Severn. The appellation of this river arises from the story of a British princess. Geoffry of Monmouth relates, that she was the daughter of Locrine king of Britain, by Elstridis, one of the three virgins of matchless charms whom he took

after he had defeated Humber king of the Huns, to whom they belonged. Locrine had divorced his former queen Guendolin in her favour. On his death, Guendolin assumed the government, pursued Elstridis and her daughter Sabra with unrelenting cruelty, and caused them to be drowned in the river, which with some alteration took the name of this innocent victim. Our poets have made a beautiful use of this story: Milton, in his description of rivers, speaks of

" The Severn swift, guilty of maiden blood;"

but in the Mask of Comus he enters fully into her sad story:

" There is a gentle nymph not far from hence,
" That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream:
" Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure;
" Whilome she was the daughter of Locrine,
" That had the scepter from his father Brute.
" She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
" Of her enraged stepdame Guendolin,
" Commended her fair innocence to the flood,
" That stay'd her flight with his cross-flowing course.
" The water-nymphs that in the bottom play'd
" Held up their pearled wrists and took her in,
" Bearing her strait to aged Nereus' hall;
" Who, piteous of her woes, rear'd her lank head,
" And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
" In nectar'd lavers strow'd with asphodil,
" And through the porch and inlet of each sense

" Dropt

" Dropt in ambrosial oils till she reviv'd,
" And underwent a quick immortal change,
" Made Goddess of the river."

Crossing the grounds of St. Pierre, and passing Pool Meyrick, a brook falling into the Severn, we turned to the right in search of MATHERN PALACE, formerly a seat of the bishops of Landaff. This building, situated in a gentle hilly country pleasingly diversified with wood and pasturage, in its present appearance conveys but a very faint idea of the splendour and good cheer that no doubt reigned there when it was the seat of the episcopacy. The structure surrounds a quadrangular court, and was raised by different bishops; the north and north-east parts, comprising the tower, porch, &c. are supposed to have been erected by John de la Zouch, who was consecrated anno 1408. Miles Salley, who came to the see in 1504, built the chapel, hall, and other apartments. Some specimens of dilapidated grandeur appear in the east window; and until lately the entrance was through a lofty ornamented porch; but this is now destroyed, and the building only occupied as a farm-house. In the north side of the chancel of Mathern church, a

Gothic structure, but of British origin, is the following epitaph written by bishop Godwin; the substance of which accounts for the manor of Mathern's becoming ecclesiastical:

> Here lyeth entombed the body of
> Theodorick, king of Morganuck, or
> Glamorgan, commonly called
> St. Thewdrick, and accounted a martyr
> because he was slain in a battle against
> the Saxons, being then Pagans, and in
> defence of the Christian religion. The
> battle was fought at Tintern, where he
> obtained a great victory. He died here,
> being in his way homeward, three
> days after the battle, having taken
> order with Maurice his son, who succeeded him in the Kingdom, that in the
> same place he should happen to decease a
> church should be built, and his body buried
> in the same; which was accordingly performed
> in the year 600." *

Within a short distance of Mathern is MOINSCOURT, another deserted ecclesiastical mansion, attributed to the erection of Bishop Godwin, and also occupied as a farm-house. This exhibits a handsome Gothic porch

* The stone coffin, containing the remains of St. Theodoric, was discovered some time since: upon removing the lid, the skeleton appeared perfectly entire, except a large fracture on the skull, which probably occasioned the death of the hero.

defended

defended by two lofty turrets: within the court-yard are the two Roman inscribed stones mentioned by Gibson in the supplement to Camden, and said to have been brought from Caerleon: one of these appears to have been a votive altar; the other records the repairing or rebuilding of the temple of Diana by T. H. Posthumius Varus.

CHAP. XVI.

CHEPSTOW — FINE SCENERY OF ITS VICINAGE — THE CASTLE — CHURCH, AND BRIDGE — PIERCEFIELD — CHARACTER OF THE LATE MR. MORRIS.

UPON meeting our horses at the village of St. Pierre, we proceeded towards Chepstow, and in a few minutes were surprized with a range of naked cliffs, rising in appearance from the tract of verdure before us; a venerable wood shadowed the brow of the rocks, in front of which rose a forest of masts with waving pennants. This singular combination resulted from the position of CHEPSTOW and its port, in an abrupt hollow, inclosed by considerable heights in every direction. The whole unfolded itself like a map beneath us, as we descended to the town; an irregular-built trading place, but where the well-

J. T. Barber delin.

J. Bluck sculp.

Chepstow Castle.

well-furnished houses and opulent establishments of many of the inhabitants engaged in business prove the success of their commercial enterprize: yet the town, having no manufactories, depends altogether on the carrying trade.

We hastened from an excellent repast at the Beaufort Arms, to enjoy the scenery in the vicinity of Chepstow-bridge; where an assemblage of objects was disclosed, highly interesting, imposing, and beautiful. Below the bridge, and on the opposite side of the deep and rapid Wye, enlivened by numerous shipping, a series of cliffs appeared issuing from the water, whose rocky surface, warmly tinted with various hues of red and yellow, was pleasingly diversified with the vivid green of aspiring ivy, while the lofty summits were fringed with impendent oaks. This trait was highly agreeable; but directing our attention up the river, the princely ruin of Chepstow Castle, stretching along a grand perpendicular cliff, which proudly emerges from the stream; and the steep hills of Piercefield rearing their varied plantations, in leafy majesty, from the river to the clouds; were features too nobly impressive not to

stamp an interest in the coldest observer. A transient gaze did not satisfy us: we paused a long time over the rails of the bridge; advanced to the opposite shores; compared the varying effect at different distances and elevations; and, as we changed our points of view, discovered fresh gleams of picturesque beauty at every movement. Nor were the leading objects of this scene less gratifying when examined in detail, than the striking *coup-d'œil* of their general composition.

As we advanced toward the massive battlements and lofty turrets of Chepstow's ancient castle, the grand entrance, a Norman arch flanked by circular towers, figured all the repulsive gloom of feudal reserve and violence; even the very knocker was emblematical of hostility; for we thundered at the portal for admission with a cannon-ball suspended by a chain. The warder of the castle did not wind his horn in reply, nor, raising himself on the ramparts, did he demand our quality and business; but a pretty smiling damsel, conjuring up all her rosy dimples, bade the gate, or rather made it, revolve on its creaking hinges, and welcomed us into the castle.

Upon

Upon entering the court, our attention was somewhat divided, between the remains of the baronial hall, numerous apartments, and the kitchen, which surrounded the area; and the well-turned arm that pointed to the several objects. A number of rooms in this court are kept in repair, and form a commodious residence, which is tenanted by Mr. Williams under a lease from the Duke of Beaufort. From this we passed to the second court, now laid out as a kitchen-garden. The third court contained the chapel, a fine remnant of antiquity, possessing a greater degree of decoration than any other part of the castle: a range of niches appear within the walls of this structure, at some distance from the floor, which is said to have been filled with statues; and the mortices of beams seem to indicate, that a gallery was conducted round the room. The style of the windows and enrichments is Gothic; but the original part of the building is Norman. Indeed, a unity of design and architecture appears throughout the fundamental parts of the castle; although, as may be expected, the continual alterations and additions of successive proprietors have left us several specimens of the intermediate

intermediate modes of building between the Norman foundation and the present age. Among the undecorative additions of the latter period, are the deserted works of a glass-house, and a dog-kennel. Beyond the chapel we ascended a flight of steps to the battlements, shadowed by wide branching trees of various descriptions, issuing from the moat beneath. Opposite to us, beyond the moat, appeared the low embowered ruins of the fourth and last court, separated from the principal mass of building by a drawbridge.

Returning, our fair guide conducted us to a subterraneous chamber with an engroined roof, excavated in the rock, beneath the ruin, and opening to the overhanging brow of the cliff. Here several old ivys darted from stony fissures that seemed to forbid vegetation, binding the mouldering summit of the cliff in their sinewy embrace; and, shedding their light tendrils round the cavern, embowered its aperture as they aspired in frequent volutions to the loftiest turrets of the pile. Here, and from several points in our perambulation of the ruin, we timidly looked down on the rapid Wye, rolling its swelling tide at an immense depth perpendicularly

cularly beneath us; and at other times the green waving hills of Piercefield rose in all their peculiar grandeur to our view, darkening the river with their widely projected shadows.

Before we left this baronial fortress, we did not fail to explore a large round tower in the first court, that was the ancient citadel; but is more noticed for having been the prison of Harry Martin the regicide. We entered a Gothic doorway, and, following the taper heels of our gentle conductress up a spiral staircase, visited each apartment in the tower; all of which proved spacious and commodious *. Here the parliamentary colonel was confined near thirty years; but not in the "durance vile" which his sympathizing biographer represents †: his family lived with him, and he had offices for his servants; he had the free range of the castle in the day-time; and, with a guard, was allowed

* Owing to a neglect of the roof, the upper stories of the building were swimming with water, and perishing very fast. It is to be hoped, that before this the Duke of Beaufort's agents have looked to their charge, and adopted proper means to prevent the entire loss of a useful habitation, and an interesting remnant of antiquity.

† Southey's Poems, p. 378.

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to visit the neighbouring gentry. Even in the tottering state of royalty, on Charles the Second's restoration, this sort of confinement was found sufficient to answer the ends of justice, and security to the ruling powers; although the republican leader, the turbulent and enterprizing Harry Martin, was the prisoner; ever glorying in his principles, and declaring, that were the treason of which he had been legally convicted to be repeated, he should enter on his part without reluctance.

The building of Chepstow (or Estrighoel) Castle, although carried by some antiquaries to the æra of Julius Cæsar *, appears to have taken place in the eleventh century, when William Fitzosborn, Earl of Hereford, built the castle to defend the ample possessions granted him in this quarter by William the

* Several of the glazed figured tiles used by the Normans, commonly called Roman tiles, patched up in different parts of the ruin, and a few Roman bricks built in the heterogeneous mass that composes the grout-work of the walls, have occasioned many persons to consider the castle as of Roman foundation. But these circumstances, standing alone, afford very inconclusive grounds. On the Normans building the castle, the Roman fragments were most probably brought from the then decaying town of Caerwent, and with other rubbish applied to the work.

Conqueror,

Conqueror, his relation. His son and successor, Roger de Britolio, taking up arms against his sovereign, was deprived of his vast inheritance; and Chepstow castle became soon after transferred to the noble family of Clare. This fortress is remarkable in history for the gallant defence that it made, with a slender garrison, against a considerable force headed by Oliver Cromwell; but after a long siege it was taken by an assault, in which nearly all its defenders were sacrificed.

The church of Chepstow, situated at the extremity of the town, below the bridge, exhibits a curious specimen of Norman architecture, in the massive arches resting on piers within, and the richly ornamented mouldings of the western entrance. The tower was erected during the last century. This church formed the nave of a much larger structure which belonged to a priory of Benedictine monks, founded by the builder of the castle. Some remains of the priory walls may be traced near the church, and of several other religious buildings in different parts of the town.

Chepstow

Chepstow Bridge is a singular structure: it was formerly entirely built with timber; but the piers of the Monmouthshire half are now constructed of stone. The flooring of this bridge, like that of many others in the county, is formed of thick planks, which are kept firm in their places by tenons, or rather wedges of wood. It is usually said, that this flooring is loose, and calculated to rise with the torrents, which sometimes swelling above the bridge would otherwise carry it away; but the fact is, that the planks are not loose: as I was informed by a workman repairing the floor, they are fastened in the manner related, in preference to nailing, that they may be more easily replaced when worn out. The tide here is reckoned to rise higher than in any other part of the world; accumulating to the height of seventy feet at particular periods; but a late examination has proved fifty-six feet to be the highest point that it has risen to during the present generation; which, though a very great rise, is not superior to what happens in some other places. The cause of this extraordinary swell proceeds from the rocks of Beachly and Aust; which, protruding far into the Severn near

near the mouth of the Wye, obstruct the flow of the tide, and oblige it to turn with increased rapidity into the latter river. I am informed, that the ruined chapel on a rock, near the mouth of the Wye, in the Severn, is an excellent subject for the pencil, in composition with the cliffs of Beachly and the adjacent scenery *.

On quitting Chepstow, and proceeding about a mile and half on the road to Monmouth, a capital lodge with iron gates and palisadoes announced the entrance of PIERCEFIELD. Eager to view this enchanting domain, the favourite resort and theme of tourists, nor less the pride of Monmouthshire, we applied at the gate for admission; when a well-grown lad made his appearance, who stared at us through the rails, with more than the usual stupidity of boys brought up at a distance from towns. Again and again, with entreaties and threats, we stated our business; but nothing could excite the gaping vacuity of his countenance, or induce him to open the gate. Rightly concluding that he was

* In the garden of a house in Bridge-street is the phenomenon of a well of soft water that ebbs and flows regularly in an exact opposition to the tide.

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an idiot, we were returning towards the town for instructions how to act, when a venerable pate with "silver crowned" appeared at the window of the lodge, and by dint of hallooing and patience, in waiting upwards of a quarter of an hour, we had the old man at the gate. He was the boy's grand-father; and, if intellect were hereditary, the boy might presume on his lineage with more chance of correctness than many of higher birth. The old man, after obliging us to hear a tedious incomprehensible narrative to account for his hobbling attendance, at length concluded by telling us, that we could not upon any account see the grounds, as they were only shewn on Tuesdays and Fridays. This was on a Saturday; but to wait until the following Tuesday would be a tax indeed; and to proceed without seeing Piercefield a sad flaw in our tour; so we essayed with success a means which, it may be remarked, when applied in a due proportion to its object, is scarcely ever known to fail.

We rode up an embowered lane to the village of St. Arvans, and, leaving our horses at the blacksmith's, entered Piercefield Grounds at a back gate. Here commencing a walk

a walk of three miles in length, we passed through agreeable plantations of oak, ash, and elm, to the edge of a perpendicular cliff, called the Lover's Leap, overlooking an abyss-like hollow, whose fearful depth is softened by a tract of forest extending over the surrounding rocks. High above competition at the northern extremity of the scene rises Wynd cliff: a dark wood fringes its lofty summit, and shelves down its sides to the river Wye, which urges its sinuous course at the bottom of the glen. In one place, the river, gently curving, appears in all the breadth of its channel; in another, projecting rocks and intervening foliage conceal its course, or sparingly exhibit its darkened surface. Following the bend of the river on its marginal height, a range of naked perpendicular cliffs (the Banagor rocks) appear above the wooded hills that prevail through the scenery; of so regular a figure, that one can scarcely help imagining it the fortification of a town, with curtains, bastions, and demi-bastions. But a very leading feature is, the peninsula of Llanicut: the hills of Piercefield, here receding into a semicircular bend, watered by the river immediately beneath,

are opposed by a similar concavity in the Banagor rocks: the whole forming a grand amphitheatre of lofty woods and precipices. From the opposite side descends a fertile expanse, or tongue of land, filling up the area of the circle. This singular valley is laid out in a compact ornamented farm; the richly verdant meadows are intersected by flourishing hedge-rows; while numerous trees diversify the tract, and imbower the farm-house: a row of elms shadows the margin of the river, which, skirting the base of the hills, nearly surrounds the valley.

These subjects disclose themselves in different combinations through intervals in the shrubbery which encloses the walk; and which, although selected from the nicest observations, are managed with so just an attention to the simplicity of nature, as to appear the work of her plastic hand.

The Giant's Cave, a little further, is a passage cut through a rock. Over one of the entrances is a mutilated colossal figure, which once sustained the fragment of a rock in his uplifted arms, threatening to overwhelm whoever dared enter his retreat; but some time since

since the stone fell, carrying the Giant's arms along with it; yet he continues to grin horribly, although deprived of his terrors. From this place a path, traced under the woods, descends to the bath, a commodious building concealed from outward view by impendent foliage.

Deserting for a while the course of the river, we ascend a superior eminence called the Double View, whence the different scenes that have presented themselves in detail appear in one comprehensive range. Here too a new field of prospect discloses itself, much more extensive than the former, and beautifully picturesque. The mazy Wye, with all its interesting accompaniments, passes from beneath us, through a richly variegated country, to its junction with the Severn, beyond whose silvery expanse the grand swelling shores of Somersetshire form the distance. A curious *deceptio visus* occurring here must not be passed over: it arises from a coincidence in the angle of vision between the embattled rocks already mentioned, and a part of the Severn; which appears to wash their summit, although in reality it is many miles distant. But the subject of the prospect

from this spot is seen much more picturesquely combined as we continue our walk on a gentle descent, and catch the varying scene through apertures in the foliage: yet there is something that one would wish to add or remove, until we reach the grotto, when a picture is exhibited in the happiest taste of composition.

In this charming view from the grotto, a diversified plantation occupies the fore-ground, and descends through a grand hollow to the river, which passes in a long reach under the elevated ruin of Chepstow Castle, the town and bridge, towards the Severn. Rocks and precipices, dark shelving forests, groves, and lawns, hang on its course; and, with a variety of sailing-vessels, are reflected from the liquid mirror, with an effect that I cannot attempt to describe, and at which the magic pencil of a Claude would falter. The distant Severn and its remote shores form an excellent termination, and complete the picture.

On our visit, the rich extent of variegated woods that mantles this charming domain received an additional diversity in the endless gradations of autumnal tints that chequered their surface; while in a few

places

J.T. Barber delin.

W. Pickett sculp.

View from Piercefield.

places the still uniform *sombre* hue of the pine and larch was admirably relieved by the silvered verdure of the lightly-branching ground-ash and witch-hazel.

Highly gratified with this delightful scenery, we returned by another track through tangled shrubberies, open groves, and waving lawns, to the mansion. This edifice is constructed of free-stone, and has had two handsome wings lately added to it by Colonel Wood, the present proprietor of the estate. Although not very extensive, it has nevertheless an elegant external appearance; and, as we were informed, is fitted up internally with a taste and splendour little inferior to any of our first-rate houses in England *.

Remounting our horses at the village of St. Arvans, a steep ascent led over some outgrounds of Piercefield to the summit of Wyndcliff, where a prodigious extent of prospect burst upon us; comprehending at one view, not only the different scenes in the neighbourhood of Chepstow, which appeared sunk into the lines of a map, but a wonderful range over nine counties.

* Col. Wood is about to dispose of this estate.

The charms of Piercefield were created by Valentine Morris, Esq. about fifty years since; to say unfolded, may be more correct; for the masterly hand of nature modelled every feature; the taste of Mr. Morris discovered them in an unnoticed forest, and disclosed them to the world: he engrafted the blandishments of art upon the majestic wildness of the scene without distorting its original character.

Philanthropic, hospitable, and magnificent, his house was promiscuously open to the numerous visitors whom curiosity led to his improvements; but alas! by his splendid liberality, his unbounded benevolence, and unforeseen contingencies, his fortune became involved; he was obliged to part with his estate, and take refuge in the West Indies. Before he left his country, he took a farewel view of Piercefield, and with manly resignation parted with that idol of his fancy. The industrious poor around, whose happiness he had promoted by his exertions and bounty, crowded towards him, and on their knees implored the interposition of Providence for the preservation of their benefactor: tears and prayers were all they had to offer; nor could

could they be suspected of insincerity; for in lamenting their protector's misfortunes they but mourned their own. In this trial he saw unmoved (at least in appearance) the widows' and orphans' anguish, though he was wont to melt at the bare mention of their sorrows. His firmness did not forsake him in quitting this affecting group, as his chaise drove off towards London; but having crossed Chepstow-bridge, the bells, muffled, as is usual on occasions of great public calamity, rang a mournful peal. Unprepared for this mark of affection and respect, he could no longer control his feelings, and burst into tears.

In leaving England he did not shake off his evil destiny. Being appointed governor of St. Vincent's, he expended the residue of his fortune in advancing the cultivation of the colony, and raising works for its defence, when the island fell into the hands of the French. Government failing to reimburse his expences during his life, upon his return to England he was thrown into the King's-bench prison by his creditors. Here he experienced all the rigour of penury and imprisonment for seven years. Of the numerous sharers of his prosperity, only his

amiable wife * and a single friend devoted themselves to participate his misery and alleviate his distress. Even the clothes and trinkets of his lady were sold to purchase bread; and, that nothing might be wanting to fill up his cup of bitterness, the faithful partner of his cares, unable to bear up against continued and accumulating misery, became insane.

At length he recovered his liberty; and fortune, tired of this long persecution, seemed to abate somewhat of her rigour; when death put an end to his chequered career at the house of his brother-in-law, Mr. Wilmot, in Bloomsbury-square, in 1789.—The neighbourhood still sounds the praises of this worthy gentleman. Old men, in recounting his good actions and unmerited misfortunes, seem warmed with the enthusiasm of youth; and little children sigh while they lisp the sufferings of Good Mr. Morris.

* She was a niece of Lord Peterborough.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

TINTERN ABBEY — IRON-WORKS — SCENERY OF THE WYE TO MONMOUTH — OLD TINTERN — BROOK'S WEIR — LANDAGO — REDBROOK.

HOW teeming with objects of curiosity and beauty is Monmouthshire! Within two or three miles of Piercefield we reached the justly-famed ruin of TINTERN ABBEY: its dark mouldering walls, solemnly rising above surrounding trees, appeared to us, in turning from a deep-wooded hollow, with a most impressive effect *. At the village adjoining we

* This part of our journey, in wading through a right Welch road, brought to my mind an anecdote of Mr. Morris. When a bill was before the House of Commons for the improvement of the roads in Monmouthshire, many gentlemen of the county, willing to plod through the same mire that had bedaubed their ancestors, gave it a strong opposition.

we put up at the Beaufort Arms, the landlord of which, Mr. Gething, holds the key of the ruin, and who, extraordinary as it may seem, unites unaffected civility and kindness with upwards of forty years initiation into the business of an inn-keeper, and, as the neighbours say, a well-lined purse. Passing the works of an iron-foundry, and a train of miserable cottages engrafted on the offices of the abbey, we found ourselves under the west front of the ruin. This confined approach, incumbered by mean buildings, is not calculated to inspire one with a very high estimation of its consequence: but, on the door's being thrown open, an effect bursts on the spectator, of so majestic and singular a description, that words can neither do justice to its merit, nor convey an adequate idea of the scene. It is neither a mere creation of art nor an exhibition of nature's charms; but a grand spectacle, in which

position. Mr. Morris, who had a mind above vulgar prejudices, and who was a warm promoter of every useful improvement, being examined at the bar of the House and questioned, "What roads have you in Monmouthshire?" replied, "None."—"How do you travel then?"—"In ditches," was his reply.

both

both seem to have blended their powers in producing something beautiful and sublime!

Through long ranges of Gothic pillars and arches, some displaying all the exquisite workmanship of their clustered shafts, while others are hung with shadowy festoons of ivy, or lightly decorated with its waving tendrils, the eye passes; and, for a moment arrested by the lofty arches rising in the middle of the structure that formerly supported the tower, it glides to the grand window at the termination of the ruin. Beyond this aperture, distinguished by a shaft of uncommon lightness springing up the middle, some wild wooded hills on the opposite side of the Wye rear their dusky summits, and close the scene with much congenial grandeur. The ruin is generally in a high state of preservation; the outer walls are perfect; and the elegant tracery of the west window above the entrance has not suffered in one of its members. A singular circumstance of this ruin, and to which may be ascribed its superior effect, is, that the fallen roof and all the other rubbish have been removed to the original level of the pavement by order of the Duke of Beaufort, and a greensward smooth as a bowling-

green

green extended throughout. Hence all the parts rise in their original and due proportion, and with an undisturbed effect. At the same time, the uniformity of a lawn-like surface is diversified with several clumps; consisting of broken columns, cornices, and the mutilated effigies of monks and heroes *, whose ashes repose within the walls: Light branching trees start from their interstices, and throw a doubtful shadow over the sculptured fragments.

Tintern Abbey is cruciform; The length of the nave and choir is two hundred and thirty feet; their width, thirty-three; and it is a hundred and sixty feet to the extremes of the transept. It was founded for Cistercian monks by Walter de Clare, anno 1131; and in 1268, according to William of Worcester, the abbot and monks entered the choir, and celebrated the first mass at the high altar. It is probable, that only that part of the building was then completed, as the other parts

* A rough carved figure of a man in a coat of mail is shewn as the effigy of Richard Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke, the founder of the abbey. This account, however, is altogether erroneous: Richard was only great nephew of the founder, and he was buried in the chapter-house of Gloucester.

of

of the church are of a later style of architecture; and it was no uncommon thing for the choir to be built and consecrated before the rest of the structure was finished.

On entering the abbey, it was determined that we should proceed no further that day: getting rid, therefore, of my companion and landlord, who retired in a consultation about dinner, I locked myself in, and employed several hours without interruption in sketching the interesting features of the ruin. At an early hour the following morning we sallied from our inn, and, crossing the Wye, were greeted with a new effect of the abbey. Majestically towering above encircling trees, the external elevation arose in nearly its original grandeur. The walls, though clad with moss and tender lichens, appeared nowhere dismantled; yet might an eye, anxious after picturesque forms, be offended with the uniform angles and strait lines of the gable ends and parapets. We walked along the banks of the sinuous river about half a mile from the ferry, when the ruin presented itself in a very agreeable point of view. Looking full through the grand aperture of the eastern window, the rows of columns and

arches,

arches, overhung with clustering ivy, wore the appearance of a delightful grove; and at the end of the perspective, the elegant tracery of the opposite window, besprinkled with verdure, was well defined; and in its distant tint had an admirable effect. These views of the mouldering abbey, combined with the wild scenery of the Wye, and the kindred gloom of a lowering atmosphere, were truly impressive and grand; yet they scarcely excited such sensations of awful sublimity as we felt on our first visit to the interior of the ruin.

In our different walks between the inn and the abbey, we were regularly beset with importunities for alms: the labouring man abandoned his employment and the housewife her family at the sight of a stranger, to obtain a few pence by debasing clamour. This system of begging we found to arise from the late distresses, particularly that of the preceding year, which, bearing on the great class of the people with an almost annihilating pressure, entitled them to the sympathy and assistance of those whom fortune had blessed with prosperity: they had strained their aching sinews to meet the exigence, yet

yet their utmost exertions proved inadequate to the means of support. Thus situated, alms or outrage formed their alternate resources; but, happily, in the benevolence of the affluent they found an asylum. This pressure was fast withdrawing, but its effects remained; they had tasted the sweets of indolence, of support without exertion; they no longer felt the dignity of independance (for the odium of begging was withdrawn by invincible necessity); and they continued the unworthy trade without remorse. Excepting a few significant curtsies in the manufactories of Neath, this was the first instance of the sort that we met with during our tour. In other places, industry was urged to its highest exertion; here, by an increased weight of necessity, it sunk beneath the pressure.

The iron-works of Tintern I believe to be almost the only concern in the neighbourhood of Wales where the old method of fusing the ore by charcoal furnaces continues to be practised. The manufacture is pursued to the forming of fine wire and plates.

The mineral wealth of this district was not unknown to the ancients; for large quantities

of

of scoria imperfectly separated from the metal, which are evidently the refuse of Roman bloomeries, and many furnaces whose origin no tradition reaches, appear in several parts of the country. These Roman cinders have been in many places reworked, according to modern improvements in metallurgy, and made to yield a considerable portion of metal. The decline of the ancient works is justly attributed to their exhausting the forests which formerly overspread Wales, for charcoal, until they were at length entirely stopped for want of fuel. But within this half century, coke made from pit-coal, which possesses the essential principles of charcoal, has been applied with success to the fusing of ore: in consequence, very numerous iron-mines have been opened; and, aided by an inexhaustible supply of coals, their produce has exceeded even the sanguine hopes of the projectors. It must, however, be remarked, that iron made with pit-coal is of inferior tenacity and ductility to that manufactured by means of charcoal. Whether this arises from a radical defect in the material used, from a too prodigal use of calcareous earth to facilitate the flux of

the

the metal, or any other cause, remains yet to be determined.

I cannot take leave of Tintern without mentioning a circumstance for the benefit of those tourists who may have an obstinate beard, or a too pliant skin. Having dispatched an attendant for a barber on my arriving at the inn, a blacksmith was forthwith introduced, who proved to be the only shaver in the village. The appearance of this man, exhibiting, with all the sootiness of his employment, his brawny black arms bare to the shoulders, did not flatter me with hopes of a very mild operation; nor were they increased upon his producing a razor that for massiveness might have served a Polypheme. I sat down, however, and was plentifully besmeared with suds; after which he endeavoured to supply the deficiency of an edge, by exerting his ponderous strength in three or four such scrapes as, without exciting my finer feelings, drew more tears into my eyes, than might have sufficed for a modern comedy. I waited for no more; but, releasing myself from his gripe, determined to pass for a Jew Rabbi, rather than undergo the penance of any more shaving at Tintern.

We crossed the Wye from Tintern, that we might follow the beauties of the river in our way to Monmouth; then ascending a precipitous wild-wooded hill, we took a farewel view of our much-loved abbey, and soon looked down on the old village of TINTERN, delightfully placed on the opposite bank of the Wye, and dignified with the ruin of the Abbot's mansion *. Upon completing our descent in traversing the hill, we entered the irregular village of BROOK'S WEIR, off which a number of sloops of from 80 to 100 tons were at anchor: these vessels were waiting for their cargoes from Hereford and Monmouth, which are brought hither in flat-bottomed barges, as the tide flows no higher than this place. We had now a delightful ride for several miles over meadows and pastures that skirted the Wye; whose majestic stream, almost filling the narrow valley, reflected the inclosing hills from its surface in a style of inimitable beauty; while the rich ascending woods on either side threw a softened light on the translucent river and

* The neighbourhood that has risen round the abbey is called Abbey Tintern, to distinguish it from this village, which is about a mile distant.

its

its verdant margin; so sweetly in harmony with the pleasing solitude of the scene, as might dispose even revelry itself to fall in love with retirement:

"O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
"Retreat from care, that never must be mine:
"How blest is he, who crowns, in shades like these,
"A youth of labour with an age of ease!"

About four miles above Tintern the rural little village of LANDAGO saluted us with its white church and cottages, glistening through encircling trees, as it skirted the river and climbed the side of a lofty hill. We then followed a gentle curvature of the Wye to Bigg's Weir, a ridge of rocks which cross the river, leaving only a small interval for the current. A string of barges was unravelling its course in this strait as we were passing; which task seemed to engage all the vigilance and activity of the watermen. Near this spot the house (an ordinary mansion) and grounds of General Rooke, member for the county of Monmouth, occupying part of the river's bank, obliged us to make a short deviation; but, soon returning to our limpid stream, we caught a glimpse of the church and castle of St. Briavel, crowning an eminence in the

forest of Dean just behind us; and in front, a short distance beyond the opposite bank, appeared the decaying importance of Pilson-house.

The narrow stripe of meadow-land that accompanies the Wye from Brook's Weir to Monmouth, and in which our road lay, now became frequently shut up from public convenience by fences crossing the tract, and styles, in the place of open gates, which the farmers had lately erected. We were therefore obliged to climb up the forest-clothed hills, of almost inaccessible steepness, driving our horses before us, and scrambling through bush and briar; and only regained the meadows to encounter a succeeding difficulty of the same kind. But our last was the greatest; for, pursuing a track broken through a closely-woven thicket that led over the hills, we neglected a doubtful opening in the brambles that indicated our road, and only guessed that we were wrong from the tedious height we were climbing. We had, however, gone too far to retreat; and therefore hoped, in the true spirit of error, as we had certainly missed the right path, that by proceeding boldly on we might extricate ourselves by another.

J. T. Barber delin.

Bluck sculp.

another. At length we reached the top of the hill, and with no small disappointment beheld our track terminate at a lonely farm-house; where no one appeared to give us information; nor was any road whatever visible for the pursuit of our journey. Yet the view that this eminence commanded over the sinuous Wye, sweeping among sloping meadows, woods, and precipices, in some sort repaid our fatigue. Obliged to return, we forced a passage through tangled underwood to the margin of the river, which, here forming an extensive reach between deep shelving banks, was thrown into one grand shadow. The evening was drawing to a close; and the retiring sun, no longer wantoning on the wavy current, sparingly glittered on the woody treasures of its marginal heights, but glared in full splendour on the distant hills; nor was a brilliant sky wanting to contrast the *sombre* solemnity of our vale:

" The evening clouds,
" Lucid or dusk with flamy purple edg'd,
" Float in gay pomp the blue horizon round;
" Amusive, changeful, shifting into shapes
" Of visionary beauty; antique towers
" With shadowy domes and pinnacles adorn'd;
" Or hills of white extent, that rise and sink
" As sportive fancy lists."

In this shady silent retreat we passed about a mile, and emerged on the village of REDBROOK, where several groupes employed in some iron and tin works, and in plying a ferry, gave animation to the scene. From this place, following a bold curve of the river, and skirting the base of the lofty Kymin, we soon came within view of Monmouth; the remarkably high spire of its church; and the large old Mansion of Troy, in a low situation, a small distance to the left, near the junction of the Trothy with the Wye.

CHAP. XVIII.

MONMOUTH — CHURCH, PRIORY, AND CASTLE — THE KYMIN — WONASTOW-HOUSE — TREOWEN — TROY-HOUSE — TRELECH — PERTHIR — NEWCASTLE — SCENFRITH CASTLE — GROSSMONT CASTLE — JOHN OF KENT.

MONMOUTH is delightfully situated in a gently undulating valley, chiefly in a high state of cultivation, surrounded by high hills: it occupies a sort of peninsula formed by the conflux of the Wye and the Monnow; so that it is nearly incircled by the two rivers. The town is extensive, and contains many good houses; particularly in a principal broad street, which extends from the market-place to an old British or Saxon bridge and gateway over the Monnow. The market-place, with

the town-hall over it, is a handsome building; but sadly disfigured by an awkward statue of Henry the Fifth, which, no doubt, was intended to ornament it. From this part a narrow street leads to St. Mary's church, which is also a handsome modern edifice, chiefly remarkable for its grand lofty spire rising 200 feet from the foundation; the tower of which affords an interesting view of the surrounding districts. This structure is engrafted upon a Gothic church that belonged to an Alien Benedictine priory of Black Monks, which was founded in the reign of Henry the First, and dedicated to the Holy Virgin. The priory-house forms a large family residence belonging to Adam Williams, Esq; and contains an apartment which the legend of the place declares to have been the library of the celebrated Geoffery of Monmouth; but the style of the building is by no means so ancient as the time of Geoffery, who, we find, was consecrated bishop of St. Asaph in 1152.

"The chronicle of Briton's kings
"From Brute to Arthur's rayne,"

written by Geoffery, has long excited the attention and controversy of the learned: by some

some it is implicitly believed; and rejected, as altogether fabulous, by others. The moderate opinion here, as in most other cases, is the best: this views it as founded on authentic documents, although distorted by monkish superstition and tricks, and a taste for the marvellous.

MONMOUTH CASTLE, situated on the banks of the Monnow in the northern part of the town, exhibits few memorials of its former extent and magnificence in its present very dilapidated state; and the remaining fragments lose much of their characteristic dignity from the bricky appearance given by the red grit stone of which they are constructed. Among these broken walls are shewn, with no small degree of exultation, traces of the chamber in which Henry the Fifth, the glory of Monmouth, was born. Adjoining to this is the ruin of a large apartment, sixty-three feet long by forty-six wide, which was probably the baronial hall, and in latter times formed the court of the Assizes. Other vestiges of the castle are evident among stables and out-houses: some vaults under the house of Mr. Cecil, of the Dyffrin, are of the

the oldest character, and may be attributed to Saxon if not to Roman workmanship.

The general building of this castle (though of very remote foundation) may be considered as posterior to the Civil wars in the third Henry's reign; when, we learn, the castle of Monmouth was taken and rased to the ground by Simon Montford, Earl of Leicester. A large mansion on the site of the castle, built with its materials, and engrafted on its ruins, is now occupied as a ladies' boarding-school. Soon after the erection of this house, a Marchioness of Worcester went thither to lie-in of her first child, at the instance of her grandfather, Henry, first Duke of Beaufort, who was anxious that his descendant should draw his first breath "near the same spot of ground and space of air, where our great hero Henry the Fifth was born."

Near the extremity of the town, by the side of the Monnow, is the county gaol; a new massive stone building, which in its plan, regulations, and superintendance, does high credit to the public spirit of the county. Without the town, at the foot of the Monnow-bridge, is St. Thomas's church, a curious

rious old structure which is supposed to have been built by the Saxons.

Monmouth is supposed by Mr. Horsley to have been a Roman station, the Blestium of Antoninus. It is a borough and corporate town, governed by a mayor, and contains about six hundred houses, and two thousand six hundred inhabitants. Woollen caps were the staple manufacture of Monmouth when that article was in general use; and Shakspeare's Fluellen alludes to this fashion: "If your "Majesty is remembered of it, the Welch-"men did goot service in a garden where "leeks did grow, wearing leeks in their "Monmouth caps." But the town has now no manufacture, although there are some iron and tin works in the neighbourhood: its commerce depends on the navigation of the Wye, in the distribution of goods between Bristol, Hereford, and adjoining districts. Yet no small part of its thriving appearance may be attributed to the numerous gentry that are induced to fix their residence here from the pleasantness of the situation.

Chippenham meadow, an agreeable plain, inclosed by the town, the Wye, and the Monnow, is the general rendezvous of Gwentonian

tonian beauty on summer (and particularly on Sunday) evenings. We had the good fortune to be in Monmouth on a Sunday, and of course did not neglect to join the promenade; where many a squire of little manors eyed us with much more inquiry than cordiality. Their dulcineas,

> "Healthful and strong, full as the summer rose
> "Blown by prevailing suns,"

displayed the vigour of youth and Wales, and possessed decided points of feminine attraction. But who would leave London to describe female beauty?

In the vicinity of Monmouth is a remarkably high hill, called the KYMIN, which rises from the banks of the Wye, on the Gloucestershire side of the river. A pleasant walk is traced to its summit, from which a wonderful range of prospect extends to a circumference of near three hundred miles. It would be tedious to enumerate the multifarious objects that present themselves in this great prospect: if any one be eminently beautiful, it is the diversified undulating vale of Monmouth, enlivened by its picturesque town and spire, and watered by the Wye, the

the Monnow, and the Trothy, limpidly meandering through fertile hollows, and at length uniting, in the course of the former river, at the foot of the hill. At the top of the Kymin, a handsome pavilion has been lately erected for the accommodation of parties; its summit is also adorned with a rich wood called Beaulieu grove, which, descending over part of its precipitous sides, forms its proudest ornament. Several walks cut through the wood terminate at the brow of steep declivities, commanding great and enchanting views; and which in the spring, as I am told, from the universality of apple orchards in this district, are as singular as they are beautiful.

There are several antique mansions in the neighbourhood of Monmouth that deserve notice. About a mile from the town, on the left of the road to Raglan, is WONASTOW-HOUSE, formerly a residence of a branch of the Herbert family *, which is conjectured to have been built about the reign of Henry the Sixth. Its situation, on a gentle emi-

* The Herberts came over soon after the Conquest, and settled at Worndee, near Abergavenny.

nence

nence commanding many extensive views, is extremely pleasant; and the surrounding farm-lands still bear traces of its park in several groves of ancient oaks and elms. The edifice, though much diminished in extent and divided into two distinct habitations, is still a venerable relic of the times, and contains several original family portraits. The old chapel belonging to the mansion is now applied to domestic use.

TREOWEN, situated about a mile further westward, to the north of the road to Raglan, was once a splendid mansion, built by Inigo Jones, and which belonged to another scion from the Herbert stock. The position of the house and grounds, now laid out in a farm, is very delightful, watered by the meandering Trothy, and still exhibiting a profusion of rich woods. Though occupied as a farm-house, and much reduced in dimensions, the mansion continues to shew many marks of its ancient grandeur, in the spacious and decorative style of the apartments, a noble staircase of oak, and its ornamented porch.

TROY-HOUSE, standing within a mile south-east of Monmouth, near the road to Chepstow, was a residence of a further ramification

fication of the prolific Herbert race *. Part of the ancient residence is visible in a Gothic gateway; but the house is of a later date, its erection being, as well as the preceding, attributed to Inigo Jones. Neither the house, though extensive, nor its situation, in a hollow near the river Trothy, possess any claim to admiration. Throughout the apartments a large collection of family pictures is arranged, which contains the portraits of many distinguished characters, but very few specimens of fine painting. In the housekeeper's room is a curious oak chimney-piece,

* The manor of Troy deviated from the Herbert line to that of the earls of Worcester about the beginning of the seventeenth century. In the Apophthegms of the Marquis of Worcester is related a punning *jeu d'esprit* upon the word Troy, between the old Marquis and his royal guest Charles the First. Sir Thomas Somerset, the Marquis's brother, residing at Troy-house, possessed a greater art in forcing plants than was at that time generally understood in England; which enabled him to send a present of fruit to the Marquis that was entirely out of the natural season. The old Peer, highly pleased, carried them to the King, and said, "Here "I present you, Sire, with that which came not from Lin- "coln that was, nor London that is, nor York that is to be, "but from Troy." Whereupon the King smiled, and answered the Marquis, "Truly, my Lord, I have heard that "corn grows where Troy town stood; but I never thought "that there had grown any apricots before."

brought

brought from Raglan Castle, carved with scriptural subjects; and in a room on the third floor is another ancient chimney-piece inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and curiously ornamented with devices of Love and Plenty.

About three miles further on the road to Chepstow is the village of TRELECH, which is supposed to have derived its name from three druidical stones standing in a field adjoining the road, near the church. They are placed upright, or rather inclining; of different heights, varying between ten and fifteen feet; and the exterior stones are the one fourteen, and the other twenty feet distant from the middle pillar: their substance is a concretion of silicious pebbles in a calcareous bed, commonly called pudding-stone, and of which some neighbouring rocks consist. This monument of antiquity is considered to have been the supporting part of a cromlech; but the stones being so far asunder invalidates the conjecture. Various large masses of the same sort of stone in the vicinity of Trelech seem to indicate the remains of other works of the same kind.

In the village, inclosed by a garden, is an earthen mound four hundred and fifty feet in

in diameter, encircled by a moat, and connected with extensive entrenchments; which is imagined to have been a Roman work, and afterwards to have been the site of a castle belonging to the Earls of Clare. The village is also remarkable for a chalybeate well that was formerly much attended. Near the church, which deserves to be noticed for the agreeable proportions of its Gothic members and its handsome spire, is a pedestal with a sun-dial, supposed to be of high antiquity: it bears a Latin inscription, commemorating Harold's victory over the Britons. Large quantities of iron scoria, scattered over the fields near the village, are generally allowed to indicate that a Roman bloomery was established near the spot.

From this place the road soon ascends the Devaudon height, traverses a tract of forest called Chepstow Park, and in the course of its progress embraces several superb and extensive views; in which the varieties of the Wye, of hanging woods, wild heathy mountains, and rich inclosures, rise in succession.

We made an excursion from Monmouth, on the road to Hereford, as far as Grosmont. Proceeding through a charming country about

three miles, we struck off on the right to visit PERTHIR, a very ancient seat of the Herbert family. Of the castellated mansion, surrounded by a moat and two drawbridges, few vestiges appear in the present diminished and patched-up building; yet some marks of former magnificence meet the observer, in a long vaulted hall, with a music gallery at the end, a large Gothic window with stone compartments, and the massive oak beams of a long passage. The extensive manors that were attached to Perthir, and which, as tradition relates, extended from thence to Ross, now exhibit but a sorry remnant of past opulence.

Mr. Lorimer, the present possessor of the estate, and a descendant of the Herberts by the female line, merrily relates an anecdote rising out of a contest for precedence between the houses of Perthir and Werndee; and which, it has been remarked, was carried on with as much inveteracy as that between the houses of York and Lancaster, and was only perhaps less bloody, as they had not the power of sacrificing the lives of thousands in their foolish quarrel. Mr. Proger, of Werndee, in company with a friend, returning

returning from Monmouth to his home, was suddenly overtaken by a violent storm; and, unable to proceed, groped his way for refuge to his cousin Powell's, at Perthir. The family was retired to rest; but the loud calls of the tempest-beaten travellers soon brought Mr. Powell to a window; and a few words informed him of his relation's predicament, requesting a night's lodging. "What! is "it you, cousin Proger? you and your friend "shall be instantly admitted;—but upon one "condition, that you will never dispute with "me hereafter upon my being the head of "the family."—"No, sir," returned Mr. Proger, "were it to rain swords and daggers, "I would drive this night to Werndee, rather "than lower the consequence of my family." Here a string of arguments was brought forward on each side; which, however interesting to the parties, would prove very trifling in relation, and which, like all other contests grounded in prejudice and proceeded in with petulance, but served to fix both parties more firmly in their errors. They parted in the bitterest enmity; and the stranger, who had silently waited the issue of the contest, in vain solicited a shelter from

the storm; for he was a friend of cousin Proger's!

Leaving Perthir, we soon passed through the little village of Newcastle, which derives its name from a castle that may still be traced in an earthen mound 300 feet in circumference, and some intrenchments, but whose history no tradition reaches. This barrow, and an ancient oak of extraordinary size, are considered by the superstitious neighbourhood to be under the immediate protection of spirits and fairies, and to form the scene of their nocturnal revels. A spring near the village is deemed miraculous in the cure of rheumatic and other disorders.

Within a mile from this place we struck off the turnpike towards SCRENFRITH CASTLE, situated on the banks of the Monnow, in a sequestered spot environed by high hills. This fortress is of the simplest construction; its area, of a trapezium form, is merely surrounded by a curtain wall with circular towers covering each angle, and a demi-turret projecting from the middle of one side. Near the centre of the area is a juliet, or high round tower, upon a mound, which formed the keep, the door and window apertures of which

which are circularly arched; but the exterior walls of the castle appear to have been originally only furnished with oilets or chinks for shooting arrows through. Encumbered by the lowly habitations of a poor village, it has little claim to picturesque merit from most points of view; but on the opposite side of the Monnow, combined with a Gothic bridge of two arches crossing the stream, it forms a pleasing picture. Screnfrith Castle is allowed to be the oldest in Monmouthshire; it is certainly of British erection, and is probably of as remote antiquity as any in Wales.

Screnfrith, Grosmont, and White Castles, formerly defended the lordship of Overwent; which, extending from the Wye to the Usk, nearly comprised the whole northern portion of Monmouthshire. This tract of country, with its castles, fell into the hands of Brian Fitz Count, Earl of Hereford, who came over with the Conqueror; but soon deviated from his family, and was afterwards seized by Henry the Third, and conferred on his favourite Hubert de Burgh. Upon the disgrace of that virtuous and able minister, the capricious monarch granted the three castles

to his son the Earl of Lancaster; and, with Caldecot castle, they still remain annexed to the dutchy.

The continuance of our journey to Grossmont, wandering in an irriguous valley among bye-lanes that were scarcely passable, although it proved very tedious in travelling, afforded us a succession of the most pleasing retired scenes imaginable. On our right a diversity of swells and hollows, variously clad in wild woods or cultivation, extended throughout our ride, where the lively and transparent Monnow, illumined by

> " The noon-tide beams
> " Which sparkling dances on the trembling stream,"

serpentized its current in endless variety. Immediately on our left, the Graig, a huge solitary mountain, reared its towering sides from the low lands in uncontended majesty, and accompanied our road to the pleasing little village of GROSMONT.

This place stands at the north-eastern limit of Monmouthshire, in an agreeable undulating valley, diversified with wood and pasture, and beautifully accompanied by the meandering Monnow, here wantoning its

most

most fantastic course. On an eminence near the village, and swelling above the river, is the picturesque ruin of its castle; a pile of no great extent, but well disposed, and profusely decorated with shrubs and ivy. The form of the structure is irregular: large circular towers cover the angles of the ramparts; within which are traces of the baronial hall, and other apartments, and beyond the mount are some remains of the barbican, or redoubt, and several entrenchments. All the door and window arches are pointed Gothic, and of the proportion in use about the thirteenth century; but the foundation of the castle is supposed to be coeval with that of Screnfrith's.—Grosmont church is a large Gothic structure, built in the form of a Roman cross; and, with its octagon tower, and high tapering spire, is a conspicuous ornament to the village.

Though now an insignificant cluster of habitations, Grosmont was formerly a town of some note. Many exterior traces of buildings, and raised causeways, constructed like Roman roads with large blocks of stone, diverging from it, prove its antique extent and importance to have been considerable: nor

is the legend of the place deficient in asserting its quondam consequence.

But with still higher interest, with more voluble earnestness, the natives recount the exploits of their reputed necromancer, JOHN OF KENT. Among a thousand other instances of his magical skill, they confidently assure you, that when he was a boy, being ordered to protect some corn from the birds, he conjured all the crows in the neighbourhood into a barn without a roof, and by force of his incantations obliged them to remain there while he visited Grosmont fair. A greater service that he performed for the country was, his building the bridge over the Monnow in one night by the agency of one of his familiars. Long did his strange actions frighten men out of their wits; and at length, dying, he outwitted the devil; for, in consideration of services while living, he agreed to surrender himself to his satanic majesty after his death, whether he was buried in or out of church; but, by ordering his body to be interred under the church wall, he contrived to slip out of the contract. A stone in the church-yard, near the chancel,

cel, is said to mark the spot of this interment.

Higher tradition relates, that this extraordinary personage was a monk, who, possessing a greater knowledge in natural philosophy than could at that time be generally comprehended, was reputed a sorcerer. The family of the Scudamores, at Kentchurch-house, about a mile from Grosmont, where he became domesticated, had a Latin translation of the Bible written by him on vellum, but which is now lost. An ancient painting of him upon wood is, however, preserved in the mansion; and a cellar in the house is described to have been the stable of his horses; steeds of no vulgar pedigree, which carried him through the air with more than the speed of witches.

From a collation of different legends and circumstances, several respectable enquirers are inclined to believe, that this necromancer was no other than the famous Owen Glendower; who, after his defeat, and the dispersion of his army, concealed himself in the disguise of a bard, or wizard. A strong circumstance which favours this conjecture is, that

that the daughter of Glendower married a Scudamore, who at the time occupied Kentchurch-house. It may also be remarked, that neither the time of the chief's death, nor the place of his sepulture, were ever positively ascertained.

Upon our return to Monmouth from this excursion, we had the good fortune to fall into the company of Mr. Wathen of Hereford, the benefit of whose local information and obliging assiduities has been felt by numerous tourists, as well as ourselves. This gentleman pointed out the most striking beauties of the Wye toward Ross; and of his directions we gladly availed ourselves the following morning, when we bade adieu to Wales and Monmouthshire. But, as it is my object to effect a general delineation of that tract of country, I shall not hesitate to break the thread of my tour, and suspend a description of the Wye's scenery and some further continuance of our route, while I traverse the north-western part of Monmouthshire, and the eastern frontier of South-Wales, which yet remains unexplored. In this part of my work, I must describe things

things as they appeared to me six years since, when I visited this portion of country in my return from a tour through the North of England and Wales, assisted by the best documents and observations that I have since been able to procure.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

ABBEY OF GRACE-DIEU—SIR DAVID GAM—WHITE CASTLE—ABERGAVENNY HILLS—THE TOWN, CASTLE, AND CHURCH.

WITHIN a short distance southward of the road from Monmouth to Abergavenny, and about three miles from the first-mentioned town, are the small remains of the abbey of GRACE-DIEU, chiefly formed into a barn, situated on a sequestered bank of the Trothy. A farm on the opposite side of the river was the park belonging to the abbey; and hence it is called Parc-gras-dieu farm; the house of which is built on the ruins of the ancient lodge.

LLANDILO CRESSENEY, the seat of Richard Lewis, Esq; pleasingly situated in a rich undulating country to the south of the road, about half way to Abergavenny, is a modern house

house built on the site of an ancient mansion of the Powells. The position commands an interesting prospect of the neighbouring country; and in the home view the church of Llandilo, with its high spire, forms a picturesque and leading object. In an adjoining field, belonging to a farm that was formerly the red-deer park of Raglan castle, is the site of Old Court, once the residence of the celebrated Sir David Gam, not less known for his courageous report upon having reconnoitred the enemy before the battle of Agincourt ("An't please you, my liege, there "are enough to be killed, enough to run "away, and enough to be taken prisoners") than for his valorous atchievements and preservation of the king's life in the encounter, though at the expence of his own. The dukes of Beaufort and the earls of Pembroke are descended from Gladys, one of his numerous progeny, which tradition has by no means curtailed; for it is asserted, that his children formed a line reaching from his house to the church.

The ruins of WHITE CASTLE are very considerable, crowning the summit of a ridgy eminence a mile and a half to the north of Llandilo.

Llandilo. Their figure is irregular; flanked by six circular towers, which, with the ramparts, are pierced with oilets. Two advancing massive towers guard the entrance, which was provided with a portcullis and drawbridge, and rendered still more formidable by an uncommonly large outwork beyond the moat, which is remarkably deep. This ruin is from every point of view imposing and grand; but its ponderous unornamented towers, and its lofty battlements, whose dark colour is rendered still more dismal by the broad shadows of impendent foliage, rather conspire to raise an image of baronical haughtiness and oppression, than of its show and hospitality; yet, in the time of Elizabeth, Churchyard describes it to be

"A statelie seate, a loftie princelie place,
"Whose beautie gives the simple soyle some grace."

From the architecture of this castle I should suppose its antiquity to be at least coeval with the first settlement of the Normans in Gwent, if not even more remote. Its history is common with that of Screnfrith and Grosmont; but over both these it holds a decided superiority in extent, and massiveness of construction.

On

On approaching ABERGAVENNY, the tourist's attention is involuntarily arrested by the singular beauty and variety of interest which the spot embraces, particularly in its encircling hills. The road skirting the Little Skyridd, a well-formed hill richly laid out in wood and pasture, opens to a fine display of the vale of Usk beneath; on the opposite side of which the continuous ridge of the wild Pontypool hills, which form the western boundary of the county, terminate in the heathy high-swelling Blorenge: a tract of wood sweeps along its base, and mixes with the sylvan knoll of Lanfoist, decorating its northern extremity. Further to the right, the elegant smooth cone of the Sugar-loaf, the highest of the Monmouthshire mountains, presents itself, issuing from among the four tributary eminences of the Pen-y-vale hills. Eastward of this mountain is the Great Skyridd, an object of considerable interest; its bipartite and truly Alpine summit, without being a forced opposition, strikingly contrasts the general undulating line of the neighbouring hills, and rears a distinct and noble character on the scene. The views from this mountain are scarcely inferior to those

those from the Sugar-loaf; while its craggy form, its asperitous summit, jagged into an immense fissure, and shelving to a ridge apex of fearful narrowness, impress a mixed emotion of awe and admiration on the adventurous climber of the height, that more than compensates for a small inferiority of altitude. There was formerly, at the top of this mountain, a Roman Catholic chapel dedicated to St. Michael, of which no vestiges remain; but a remembrance of the site is preserved in a hollow place formed by the superstitious, who, resorting here on Michaelmas eve, carry away the earth to strew over the sepulchres of their friends. According to the barometrical measurement of General Roy, the height of the Sugar-loaf mountain is 1852 feet perpendicular above the Gavenny rivulet, near its junction with the Usk. The Blorenge is 1720, and the Great Skyridd 1498 feet from the same level.

The expansive bases of these mountains, nearly approximating, descend to a finely-wooded fertile valley; through which the river Usk, rushing from a majestic portal of wood, winds in a bright translucid stream, with all the impetuosity of its mountain character.

character. At the foot of one of the confederated hills sustaining the towering cone of the Sugar-loaf, which gently inclines to the river, ABERGAVENNY is situated; a straggling irregular town, pleasingly interspersed with trees, but deriving its highest attraction from the charms of its position.

Upon an eminence above the river, near the southern extremity of the town, is the ruined castle, which in its present state exhibits very few memorials of former magnificence. The gate-house, or principal entrance, is tolerably entire, and vestiges of two courts may be traced among the broken walls; but of the citadel no traces remain, although an intrenched mound close to the ruins evidently marks its site. The town was also fortified, and many portions of the work remain, particularly Tudor's gate, the western entrance, furnished with two portcullisses, and remarkable for the beautifully composed landscape seen through it. This castle is said to have been built by a giant named Agros: without contending for the accuracy of this tradition, however, it is certain, that the principal part was erected

by the Normans upon the site of a British fortress.

In the twelfth century some native forces, headed by Sitfylt ap Dyfnwald, a Welch prince, assailed this castle, and took prisoners the Anglo-Norman garrison, with their chief, William-de-Braose, lord of Brecon. William being, upon an adjustment of differences, reinstated in his possessions, invited Sitfylt, his son Geoffery, and other chieftains of Gwent, to a great feast at Abergavenny Castle, where they were all treacherously murdered: he then surprised Sitfylt's house, and slew his other son, Cadwallader, in the presence of his mother. This barbarity did not escape punishment. William, flying his country, died a wretched wanderer at Paris; and his wife and son were famished in Windsor Castle. The fate of his grandson, Reginald, may also be considered in the light of a retribution: Llewelyn prince of Wales, suspecting him, as Dugdale relates, "of over much familiarity with his wife," subtilly invited him to an eastern feast; and towards the close of the banquet, charging him with the act, threw him into prison, where he suffered

fered a violent death, together with the adultress. In 1273, we find the country of Overwent, including the castle of Abergavenny, in the possession of John de Hastings, a very pink of chivalry. A succession of valorous knights inherited this domain; but Richard Earl of Warwick, who became lord of Abergavenny in the commencement of the fifteenth century, surpassed them all, and even John himself, in military fame, and manners debonnair: he signalized himself in tournaments at most of the courts in Europe, and obtained the honourable appellation of "the father of courtesy."

The church is a large Gothic structure, and appears to have been built in the form of a Roman cross, but is now curtailed of its transepts; at the juncture of one of them, a circular arch, now filled up, wears a Norman character, and seems to have been part of the original building. Three arches, curiously dissimilar, separate the north aile from the nave. The choir remains in its antique state, with stalls for a prior and his monks, formed of oak, and rudely carved; and the ailes on either side are furnished

with the monuments of several illustrious personages.

On the north of the choir is the figure of a man in a coat of mail, with a bull at his feet; supposed to be the monument of Sir Edward Nevill, which is thus explained by Churchyard:

> "His force was much; for he by strength
> "With bull did struggle so,
> "He broke cleane off his horns at length,
> "And therewith let him go."

On the opposite side is the recumbent effigy of an armed knight, his legs across *, and his feet resting on a greyhound. Of this the sexton's legend relates, that the knight, returning home, saw his infant son lying on the floor covered with blood, with his cradle overturned at his side, and the hound standing by, with his mouth besmeared with gore. Conceiving that the dog had attacked the child, he instantly killed it; but soon discovered, that the blood issued from a large ser-

* This cross-legged position of sepulchral effigies does not denote that the person represented was a Knight Templar, as is generally supposed; but that he had visited the Holy Land: indeed, his having entered into vows that he would perform the journey, entitled him to this distinction.

pent

pent that had writhed about the child, and which this faithful animal had destroyed.

In the middle of the south aile of the choir, generally called the Herberts' chapel, is the effigy of Sir William ap Thomas, and his wife Gladys, daughter of the celebrated Sir David Gam. Beneath a handsome alabaster monument, at the further end of the chapel, repose the ashes of Sir Richard Herbert, of Coldbrook, and his wife. This Sir Richard, a younger son of the just mentioned Sir William ap Thomas, was a man of gigantic stature and uncommon strength. In the contest between the houses of York and Lancaster, he with his brother the Earl of Pembroke supported the White rose at the battle of Banbury, where he was at length taken prisoner, and finally executed by the successful faction; but not until he had passed and repassed twice through the adverse army, killing with a pole-ax no less than 140 men; which, his illustrious descendant and biographer, lord Herbert of Cherbury, remarks, is more than is famed of Amadis de Gaul, or the Knight of the Sun. The richest monument in the church is that of Sir Richard Herbert of Ewias, his nephew,

which occupies a recess in the south wall of the chapel.

Before the dissolution of religious houses, this church belonged to a priory of Benedictine monks, which was founded by Hamelin Baladun *, who is also said to have built the castle. The priory house, adjoining the nave of the church, is converted into a commodious dwelling, which was lately tenanted by the Gunter and Milborne family. The free-school in the town was founded by Henry the Eighth, and amply endowed with the revenues of forfeited monasteries, &c.

Abergavenny was a Roman town, the Gobannium of Antoninus. Leland describes it to be "a faire waulled town, meately well inhabited;" and an account of Monmouthshire written in 1602 represents it as "a fine town, wealthy and thriving, and the very

* One of his posterity, William de Braose, in the reign of King John, says Dugdale, "gave the tithes of his castle, "*viz.* of bread, wine, beer, cyder, all manner of flesh, fish, "salt, honey, wax, tallow, and in general whatsoever "should be brought thither and spent there, upon con- "dition that the Abbot and Convent of St. Vincent's in "Mans, to which the priory was a cell, should daily pray "for the soul of King Henry the First; as also for the soul "of him the said William and the soul of Maud his wife."

best

best in the shire." But during the last century it was in a very declining state until the establishment of some great iron-works, which have lately sprung up in the adjacent mountains. When full-bottomed flaxen wigs were the rage, the town enjoyed a temporary prosperity from a method peculiar to its inhabitants of bleaching hair; but, perriwigs being no longer the rage, the place was hastening to decay: just at this juncture the faculty proclaimed that goats-whey was a specific in consumptive cases; and crowds of invalids, under the fiat of death, immediately enlivened the town. But the fashions of doctors are no more stationary than those of beaux; the *ton* for goats-whey soon diminished; and, deprived of patients as well as perriwigs, the place was relapsing into poverty and desertion, when the fortunate discovery of the Blaenavon iron mines (a grand concern in the recesses of the Blorenge mountain well worth the tourist's attention) gave a new face to the town, and still daily encreases its population.

CHAP. XX.

WERNDEE—FAMILY PRIDE—LANTHONY ABBEY—OLD CASTLE.

ABOUT two miles from Abergavenny is WERNDEE, a poor patched-up house: though once a mansion of no less magnificence than antiquity, it is now only interesting as being considered to have been the spot where the prolific Herbert race was first implanted in Britain. Henry de Herbert, chamberlain to king Henry the First, is supposed to have been their great ancestor. Of the vast possessions that formerly supported the grandeur of the Herberts, the inheritance of Mr. Proger, the last lineal descendant from the elder branch of this family, who died about twenty years since, had dwindled to less than two hundred a year. Mr. Coxe relates an anecdote of this gentleman's pride of ancestry,

cestry, which may be compared with the remarks on Perthir *; at the same time, it conveys a brief outline of the family's genealogy.

Mr. Proger accidentally met a stranger near his house, who made various enquiries respecting the prospects and local objects of the situation; and at length demanded, "Pray, "whose is this antique mansion before us?"—"That, Sir, is Werndee: a very ancient "house; for *out* of it *came* the earls of Pem-"broke of the first line, and the earls of Pem-"broke of the second line; the lords Her-"bert of Cherbury, the Herberts of Cold-"brook, Rumney, Cardiff, and York; the "Morgans of Acton; the earl of Hunsdon; "the Jones's of Treowen and Lanarth, and "all the Powells. *Out* of this house also, "by the female line, *came* the dukes of "Beaufort."—"And pray, Sir, who lives "there now?"—"I do, Sir."—Then pardon "me, Sir—do not lose sight of all these "prudent examples; but *come out* of it "yourself, or 'twill tumble and crush you."

A principal excursion from Abergavenny is that which leads northward to Lanthony

* See Page 290.

abbey,

abbey, a majestic ruin seated in a deep recess of the Black mountains, at the very extremity of the county. The first part of the route lies through a romantic pass between the Skyridd and Sugar-loaf mountains, upon the Hereford turnpike. Proceeding about two miles, the church of Landeilo Bertholly appears on the right; and not far from it an antique mansion called the White-house, a residence of the Floyers. Another ancient house occurs at the village of Llanvihangel Crickhornell, seen through groves of firs, lately a seat of the Arnolds, but now occupied as a farm-house. From this spot a ditch-like road, almost impracticable for carriages, strikes off among the mountains,

"Through tangled forests, and through dang'rous ways,"

carried upon precipices impendent over the brawling torrent of the Hondy. Sometimes the road opens to scenes of the most romantic description, where, at an immense depth beneath, the torrent is seen raging in a bed of rocks, and mountains of the most imposing aspect rise from the valley,—

"The nodding horrors of whose shady brows
Threat the forlorn and wand'ring traveller."

Immediately

J T Barber delin

J Black sculp.

Immediately to the left of the road rises the Gaer, a huge rocky hill crowned with an ancient encampment. On the opposite side of the river, fearfully hanging on a steep cliff, and beneath a menacing hill bristled with innumerable craigs, is the romantic village of CWMJOY. Landscapes of the boldest composition would be continual, but that the road, formed into a deep hollow, and overtopped by hedge-row elms, excludes the traveller from almost every view but that of his embowered track. The pedestrian, however, is at liberty, while ranging among heaths and fields above the road, to enjoy the wild grandeur of the country, which will hardly fail to repay him for his additional toil.

In the deep gloomy vale of Ewias, encircled by the barren summits of the Black mountains, but enjoying some degree of local cultivation, and enlivened by the crystalline Hondy, is situated the ruin of LANTHONY ABBEY.

Venerable and grand, but wholly devoid of ornament, it partakes of the character of the surrounding scenery. Not a single tendril of ivy decorates the massive walls of the structure, and but a sprinkling of shrubs and light

light branchy trees fringe the high parapets, or shade the broken fragments beneath.

" Where rev'rend shrines in Gothic grandeur stood,
" The nettle or the noxious night-shade spreads;
" And ashlings, wafted from the neighbouring wood,
" Through the worn turrets wave their trembling heads."

The area of the church is not very extensive; the length is 212 feet; the breadth 50; and it measures 100 across the transepts. The roof has long since fallen in, and a great part of the south wall is now a prostrate ruin; but the view afforded of the interior, in consequence, is extremely grand and picturesque. A double row of pointed arches, reposing on massive piers, separate the side ailes from the nave; above which, divided from the Gothic form by a strait band or fascia, is a series of small circular arches: an intermixture and arrangement of the two forms that characterize the earliest use of Gothic architecture. Two lofty arches, rising from the middle of the church, still sustain a massive portion of the tower, whose doubtfully poised and ponderous bulk seriously menaces the adventurous explorer of the ruin. The grandeur of the western front cannot be passed unnoticed; nor, looking over the fragments of the choir, the fine view

of

of the inside ruin, seen through the great eastern arch of the tower; neither is a small chapel adjoining the south transept, with a well-formed engroined roof, to be neglected: the transept is remarkable for a large Norman archway that led into the south aile of the choir.

Many portions of building appear in detached heaps near the abbey church, particularly a bold arch in a neighbouring barn, which seems to have formed the principal entrance to the abbey. Among these the natives point out a low subterraneous passage, faced with hewn stone, which they suppose to have had a connexion with Old Castle, about three miles distant.

St. David, the uncle of king Arthur (say ancient legends), was so struck with this sequestered recess, then almost unconscious of a human footstep, that he built a chapel on the spot, and passed many years in it as a hermit. William, a retainer of the earl of Hereford's in the reign of William Rufus, being led into the valley in pursuit of a deer, espied the hermitage. The deep solitude of the place, and the mysterious appearance of the building, conspired to fill him with religious enthusiasm; and he instantly disclaimed all

all worldly enjoyments for a life of prayer and mortification.

In a curious account of the abbey, written by one of its monks, which is preserved in Dugdale's Monasticon, and translated into English by Atkyns, in his History of Gloucestershire, it is recorded, that "He laid "aside his belt and girded himself with a "rope; instead of fine linen, he covered "himself with hair-cloth; and instead of his "soldier's robe, he loaded himself with "weighty irons. The suit of armour, which "before defended him from the darts of his "enemies, he still wore as a garment to "harden him against the soft temptations of "his old enemy Satan; that, as the outward "man was afflicted by austerity, the inner-"man might be secured for the service of "God. That his zeal might not cool, he "thus crucified himself, and continued this "hard armour on his body until it was worn "out with rust and age."

His austerity of life, and sanctity, not only drew to him a colleague (Ernesi, chaplain to Maud wife of Henry the First), but excited the reverence of many high characters, and

induced

induced Hugh de Laci, earl of Hereford, to found a priory of regular canons of the order of St. Austin on the site of the Hermitage. The institution adopted William's mortifying system, and its reputation occasioned numerous donations to be offered; but they were constantly refused, and the acquisition of wealth deprecated as a dreadful misfortune. William was determined "to dwell poor in "the house of God." The monk of Lanthony comically relates, that "Queen Maud, "not sufficiently acquainted with the sanctity "and disinterestedness of William, once de- "sired permission to put her hand into his "bosom; and when he with great modesty "submitted to her importunity, she con- "veyed a large purse of gold between his "coarse shirt and iron boddice; and thus by "a pleasant and innocent subtlety admi- "nistered some comfortable relief to him. "But oh the wonderful contempt of the world! "He displayed a rare example, that the truest "happiness consists in possessing little or no- "thing! He complied, indeed, but unwill- "ingly, and only with a view that the queen "might employ her devout liberality in adorn- "ing the church." His scruples thus over-

come,

come, a new church on a more magnificent plan was erected (that which now appears); it soon displayed the usual pomp of the craft, and in less than thirty years the monks came to one opinion, that "the outward man" deserved consideration; that the "place was "unfit for a reasonable creature, much less "for religious persons:" nay some said, that "they wished every stone of the foundation "a stout hare;" others, still more wicked, "that every stone was at the bottom of the "sea." Hence, in the year 1136, we find a new Lanthony abbey built and consecrated near Gloucester, which, although at first only a cell to our abbey, soon assumed a priority over the parent foundation. The treasures, library, rich vestments, and even bells, were removed to the new house: the old Lanthony then came to be considered as a prison by the fat monks of the Severn, who sent thither only "their old and useless members."

In doleful mood the monk complains, "We are made the scum and outcast of the "brethren." — "They permitted the mo- "nastery to be reduced to such poverty, "that the friars were without surplices, and "compelled

"compelled to perform the duties of the "church against the customs and rules of the "order. Sometimes they had no breeches, "and could not attend divine service." Thus it appears, that eventually the condition of the monks, though sore against their wills, reverted to the intention of their founder. The monastery continued in this unthriving state till the dissolution of those concerns; when, according to Dugdale, the abbey near Gloucester was valued at 648*l.* 19*s.* 11*d.* and this in Monmouthshire at 71*l.* 3*s.* 2*d.*

OLDCASTLE, a little village on the eastern slope of the Black mountains which skirt the vale of Ewias on the right, is supposed by Gale and Stukeley to have been the ancient Blestium, but upon grounds that are very inconclusive: true it is, however, that several encampments near the spot wear a Roman character, and they were in the habit of raising such camps near their station. But the place is more noticed as having been the residence of Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, the companion of Henry the Fifth, and afterwards chief of the Lollards, and martyr to their religious views. His ancient mansion, called the court-house, was taken

down about thirty years ago; so that nothing now remains to satisfy the antiquary.

But the picturesque traveller will hardly fail of a lively interest, while, traversing the superior heights of the neighbouring mountains, he views the grand extent of the Monmouthshire wilds, and traces the different combinations of its majestic hills, which in some parts range into the most sinuous forms, in others extend for many miles into direct longitudinal ridges; or, when, withdrawing from the sterile dignity of the high lands, his eye gratefully reposes on the gentle vallies that sweep beneath their brows, enlivened by glistening streams, and rich in all the luxuriance of high cultivation.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

RE-ENTRANCE OF SOUTH WALES—CRICKHOWELL—TRETOWER—BRECON CASTLE AND PRIORY—ROAD TO LLANDOVERY—TRECASTLE—PASS OF CWM-DUR—LLANDOVERY CASTLE—ROAD FROM BRECON TO HEREFORD—BRUNLYSS CASTLE—FEMALE VENGEANCE—HAY—CLIFFORD CASTLE.

THE road from Abergavenny to Brecon, bordering the clear and lively Usk in a romantic valley, soon leaves the charming county of Monmouth; but is attended with such a continuance of agreeable scenery as may diminish in a considerable degree the regret of the tourist. Among the verdant accompaniments of the serpentizing river, the rich groves and smiling lawns of Dany

Park are conspicuous, swelling above a fertile vale, and backed by a range of wild mountains. Nearly opposite this, in a field to the right of the road and the fifteen mile-stone from Brecon, is a single upright stone, about fourteen feet high, conjectured to be a monument of the druidical ages.

CRICKHOWELL, about two miles farther, is an old mean-built town; but, hanging on the steep declivities of a fine hill, and dignified with the picturesque ruin of a castle, it is an interesting object in the approach. The extent of this fragment of antiquity (of obscure origin), sometimes called Alashby Castle, is by no means considerable; the foundation of the keep, seated on a high artificial mound, denotes much original strength, and all the standing walls shew a very remote erection; although a few enrichments of later times may be perceived beneath the thickly-woven ivy. A narrow Gothic bridge crosses the Usk here to the pleasing village of Langottoc, the neighbourhood of which is enlivened with several handsome seats; but no one is more remarkable for the excellence of its position and the singularity of its design

sign than a lately-erected residence of Admiral Gell's.

The road continues scenic and entertaining to the small village of TRETOWER, only to be noticed for a few picturesque fragments of its castle, once the residence of Mynarch lord of Brecon. Then winding round a conical eminence, the road ascends a mighty hill called the Bwlch, which term signifies a rent in a mountain: during which ascent, a farewel view of the vale of the Usk, with a small tributary valley, and its appendant stream descending from some gloomy mountains to the north, and joining it near the castle of Tretower, is truly interesting and grand. But from these wide-ranging views, and all external scenery, the tourist becomes shut up on entering the pass of the mountains, a sterile hollow, from which he emerges on a subject of an entirely opposite and very singular description. Surrounded by dark mountains, melancholy and waste, appears an extensive lake called LANGOR'S POOL, upwards of six miles in circumference; which, as the natives assure you, is the site of a large city swallowed up by an earthquake, and is

so well furnished with perch, tench, and eels, as to be one-third fish to two-thirds water.

In the neighbourhood of the lake north-eastward, and near the head of the Lleveny brook, which empties itself into the pool, I find described the ruins of BLAEN-LLEVENY CASTLE. It was fortified by Peter Fitz-Herbert, descended of Bernard de Newmarch, lord of Brecon, according to the opinion of some antiquaries, upon the site of the Roman Loventium.

The road soon descends to the fine vale of Brecon, grandly accompanied by a semicircular range of mountains; where, proudly rising in superior majesty, the Van rears its furrowed and bipartite summit high above the clouds. Advancing, cultivation takes a more extensive sweep, and picturesque disposition becomes frequent. The Usk flowing round the foot of the Bwlch, cloathed with the extensive plantations of Buckland-house, salutes the beholder with renewed attractions; and farther up the vale laves the charming woody eminence of Peterstone in its sinuous career.

On the left of the road, about five miles from Brecon, is a stone pillar, six feet in height,

height, and nearly cylindrical; on which is an inscription that Camden read, N—— FILIUS VICTORINI, but which is now almost obliterated. He supposes it a monument of later ages than the Romans, although inscribed with their characters, and wearing the general appearance of a Roman *cippus*. In the parish of Llahn Hamwalch, standing on the summit of a hill near the church, (which is to the left of the road a little beyond the former monument) I find described St. Iltut's hermitage, composed of four large flat stones; three of which, standing upright, are surmounted by the fourth, so as to form a sort of hut, eight feet long, four wide, and nearly the same in height. This kind of monument is called a Kist-vaen, a variety of the Cromlech order, and supposed to have been applied to the same purposes.

BRECON is delightfully situated upon a gentle swell above the Usk, overlooking a fertile highly-cultivated valley enlivened with numerous seats, and enriched with several sylvan knolls. On one side of the town, beneath the majestic hanging groves of the priory, the impetuous Hondy loudly mur-

murs, and unites with the Usk a small distance beyond its handsome bridge. Though the town boasts many capital residences, yet, encumbered by a number of mean hovels even in its principal situations, and deficient in regulations of cleanliness, it fails to create any idea of importance. Its once magnificent castle is now curtailed to a very insignificant ruin; and that little is so choaked up with miserable habitations, as to exhibit no token of antique grandeur: some broken walls and a solitary tower compose its remains.

Brecon Castle was founded by Bernard de Newmarch in the reign of William Rufus. Llewelyn prince of Wales besieged it when asserting the rights of his ancestry and friends, but without success. Passing through the hands of the Braoses and Bohuns, it fell to the king-making Buckingham, when it became the seat of chivalric splendour. To his care Dr. Morton, bishop of Ely, was committed by Richard the Third; and the remaining turret is still called Ely tower by the natives, and described to have been his prison. Buckingham, fired with resentment by

by the ingratitude of Richard, whom he had raised to power, contrived, with his prisoner in this place, the means of his overthrow. The plot succeeded, but the duke was betrayed and taken before its completion, and lost his head: the more wary priest retired in secresy during its operation, and preserved his to wear the metropolitan mitre in the ensuing reign. Bernard also founded a Benedictine priory for six monks westward of the town; it was dedicated to St. John, subordinate to Battle abbey in Sussex, and became collegiate under Henry the Eighth. The church is a grand cruciform building, 200 feet in length by 60 in width, and has an embattled tower 90 feet high rising from the centre of the building. A cloister extends from the church to the priory-house; where the tourist, as he paces the refectory, or great dining-room, may speculate on monkish carousals, where blue-eyed nuns were jovially toasted, and secret confessions anticipated.

But the most fascinating attraction of the town is its two delightful walks: the one traced on the margin of the noble Usk; the other, called the priory walk, a luxuriant grove

grove impendent over the brawling Hondy, once assigned to the meditations of monkish fraud, but now more happily applied to the use of the townspeople, and enlivened on fine evenings by a brilliant promenade of Cambrian beauties.

This town, built on the site of a Roman station *, was originally called Aber-Hondy. After the departure of the Romans, the lordship of Brecon remained in the hands of the Britons till the reign of William Rufus; when Bernard de Newmarch, a Norman baron of great skill and prowess, having assembled a large body of troops, made a successful inroad into the country, killed the British chief Bledhyn ap Maenyrch, and retained his son prisoner in Brecon castle during his life; though he, at the same time, allowed him a nominal share of his father's territories. He then fortified the town with a castle, and an encircling wall, having three gates; and fur-

* There is an oblong camp in the neighbourhood of the town called *Y Gaer*; where Roman bricks, bearing the inscription LEG. II. AUG. are frequently ploughed up. Near this camp is a rude pillar, about six feet high, called the *maiden stone*; on one side of which are the figures of a man and woman coarsely carved in relief.

ther

ther strengthened his cause by taking to wife Nesta, grand-daughter of Gruffyth prince of Wales.

A road passing from Brecon through Llandovery to Llandilo, in Caermarthenshire, we did not travel; but find it described as highly picturesque, and otherwise interesting. For several miles it traverses an undulating district enlivened by the Usk; which now, approaching its source in the Trecastle hills, assumes all the impetuosity of a mountain torrent. The spacious lawns, long avenues of trees, and extensive plantations of Penbont, grace the borders of the stream about three miles from Brecon; and on the left of the road, a small distance further, appear the trifling remains of Davenock castle. TRECASTLE, ten miles from Brecon, a small village but possessing a good inn, is deprived of every vestige of its ancient fortification. From this place the road winds for nine miles to Llandovery, in a deep valley, between the mountains, called CWM-DWR, a romantic pass watered by a lively stream, and dotted with numerous cottages, whose fertile hollow is beautifully contrasted by the wild aspect of the

the impendent heights. LLANDOVERY is a small irregular town, nearly encompassed by rivulets, and only to be noticed by the picturesque traveller for the small ruins of its ivy-mantled castle. The road then continues to Llandilo on a high terrace, ornamented on the right by the groves of Taliaris and Abermarle parks, and overlooking the upper vale of Towey, rich in cultivation and the beauty of its stream.

On the road to Hereford from Brecon, about seven miles, is BRUNLYSS CASTLE; the principal and almost only feature of which is a high round tower on an artificial mount. Its foundation is uncertain, but cannot be later than the first settlement of the Normans in the county. There is a curious circumstance connected with an incident in the history of this castle, which I think very probably suggested the character of Faulconbridge in Shakespeare's play of King John. The acknowledged son and heir of Bernard de Newmarch and his wife Nesta was Mahel, a dauntless youth, who, after the death of Bernard, having affronted a paramour of his mother's, and upbraided the matron herself,

became

became in a most extraordinary manner deprived of his inheritance. Nesta, enraged at the interference of her son in her tender arrangements, presented herself before Henry the Second, and solemnly made oath that he was not the son of Bernard lord of Brecon, but was begotten by a Cambrian warrior, thereby proclaiming her son a bastard, and satisfying her revenge, though at the expence of every maternal tie and of the strongest sentiments of female worth. Bernard's estates, in consequence, fell to his daughter Sibyl wife of Milo earl of Hereford; and Mahel, ejected from his patrimony, became a lawless desperado. Once, as he was on a predatory excursion over the domains of David Fitzgerald, bishop of St. David's, he was entertained by Walter de Clifford in Brunlyss Castle for one night; when the building took fire, and he, in endeavouring to escape, was crushed to death by the falling of a stone.

HAY, a small populous town on this road, at the extremity of the principality, occupies an eminence near the banks of the Wye, and was formerly graced with a fine castle, which

which is now reduced to a few broken walls: but CLIFFORD, a mile or two further, on the upper road to Hereford, still exhibits the majestic remains of its castle, crowning a bold hill which towers above the river, and has been long renowned as having been the birth-place of the lovely, but frail fair Rosamond.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

BUALT — PRINCE LLEWELYN — RHAYDER-GOWY — CARACTACUS'S CAMP — OFFA'S DYKE — KNIGHTON — PRESTEIGN — OLD AND NEW RADNOR — LLANDRINDOD WELLS.

PROCEEDING northward from Brecon, the road passes over an abrupt succession of hills and hollows near the impatient Hondy, which is seen to extend for several miles through a wild romantic valley. On leaving the lively rivulet's devious course, the road traverses an extensive hilly tract, from whose summits a grand expansive valley, dignified with the sinuous Wye, bursts upon the view in a long continuance of varied scenery. The town of Bualt occupies a spot on the nearmost side of the vale, overhanging the pride of Welch rivers; and beyond its opposite

posite hilly boundary, a majestic outline of distant mountains defines the horizon. A picturesque cascade, rushing through a portal of rocks and woods to the left of the road, must not be passed unnoticed; it occurs within a mile of Bualt; and after crossing the road beneath its bridge, the stream unites with the Wye.

BUALT is a small market-town comprised in two streets rising one over the other, upon the high shelving bank of the river. Although anciently and irregularly built, it is much resorted to by the neighbouring gentry, not less for the beauty of its position, than for the famed salubrity of its air. Camden supposes it to be the Bullacum Silurum of Ptolemy, and the Burrium of Antoninus. Horseley, on the other hand, fixes upon Usk in Monmouthshire as the site of that Roman station; while other antiquaries contend in favour of Caerphilly. However this may have been, the only vestige of high antiquity that now marks the place is a mound, the site of the keep of its castle, which was burnt down in 1690.

It was in the neighbourhood of Bualt, between the Wye and its tributary stream the Irvon,

Irvon, that the Cambrian warriors made their last stand for independence. The brave Llewelyn,

"Great patriot hero, ill-requited chief,"

after a transient victory at the foot of Snowdon, led his troops to this position, where they were unexpectedly attacked and defeated by the English forces, while Llewelyn, unarmed, was employed in a conference with some chieftains in a valley not far distant. The prince was informed of the event by the cries of his flying army; and all that prompt intrepidity could effect he exerted to rejoin his men; but in vain; the spear of his enemy pierced his side, and happily spared him the anguish of witnessing the irretrievable ruin of his country's liberties.

Edward's conduct to the body of this prince, royal like himself, of a lineage still more ancient and noble, and who boldly fell asserting the rights of his country and inheritance, has affixed a blot on his memory, which not all his well-regulated ambition, not all the splendour of his victories, can gloss over, or efface from the page of history. The prince's head was received in London with such demonstrations

monstrations of joy by the citizens, as might have suited a conquest over a predatory invader; it was carried on the point of a lance through Cheapside; and, after having been fixed in the pillory, was placed on the highest part of the tower of London, to glut the eyes of the multitude. So easy is it to impose on the natural feelings of a people once cajoled into an approval of military despotism and cruelty.

On leaving Bualt, and crossing its bridge, the tourist enters RADNORSHIRE, where the road, traced upon heights impendent over the Wye, commands one of the most beautifully romantic vallies in the principality. The river, which we have before seen majestically flowing, rapid but unopposed, among flowery lawns, here, approaching its native source in the bosom of Plinlimmon, appears eddying, foaming, and roaring in a narrow channel, amid shelving rocks and disjointed craigs, a mere mountain torrent. With the accompaniments of towering precipices, naked rocks, and impendent cliffs, finely softened by overhanging branchy trees, or partially concealed by deep shadowy woods, and frequently enlivened by a stripe

of

of verdant meadow, the river presents a succession of picturesque *morçeaus*, the most striking imaginable; and fully compensates the bad state of the road in this part. A considerable range of prospect also presents itself on the right, from some favoured eminences, where a long series of moorish lumpy hills extend over the greater part of Radnorshire, which shews but an indifferent mixture of cultivation with numerous heaths and forests.

An extensive mountainous dreary region,

"Where woods, and wilds, and thorny ways appear,"

occupies part of the counties of Brecon, Cardigan, and Radnor, westward of the Wye. Among these deep solitudes, Camden informs us, king Vortigern sought a refuge from the persecutions that his crimes and follies raised against him. His ultimate fate is wrapped in uncertainty; but his vileness needed not a more agonizing torture than his wounded conscience, whether recurring to his incestuous intercourse with his own offspring, or to his miserable policy in resting the defence of Britain upon the assistance of foreign troops.

RHAYDER-GOWY, wildly situated at the foot of the mountainous barrier between South and North Wales, consists of two streets of neatly whitened houses, and is graced with the vicinity of two churches. A castle also added to the consequence of the town in the time of the Welch princes; but none of its remains now appear, except a deep trench cut in the rock of the town, and three or four barrows, which are, no doubt, connected with its history. The market-house is a neat little building, though of rough stones; and the Red Lion inn is no less remarkable for its neatness and accommodation, useful though unimposing, than for the obliging assiduities of its landlord.

The scenery of the Wye, close to this town, acquires an uncommon degree of grandeur. Raging in its rocky bed, the river is seen through the light foliage of impendent trees, and almost beneath a bold arch which bestrides the river, bounding over a ledge of rock in a fall of some depth; whence it tears its way among protruding crags in a sheet of glistening foam, but is almost immediately concealed by the embowering ornaments of its banks.

Above

Above the town of Rhayder, a bold hilly region, overspread with treacherous bogs, or broken into precipices of fearful depth, mixes with the magnificent forms of the North Wales mountains. Here nature wears her wildest garb; no stripe of cultivation controls the dreary majesty of the scene; the mountain sheep browse on the dizzy heights unmindful of danger; the hardy ponies here sport away their early years, unconscious of restraint; and, no less free, the bold mountaineer looks round his stormy world, nor hapless mourns the gayer spheres below:

" But calm, and bred in ignorance and toil,
" Each wish contracting, fits him to the soil.
" Cheerful at morn, he wakes from short repose,
" Breathes the keen air, and carols as he goes;
" At night returning, every labour sped,
" He sits him down the monarch of a shed;
" Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round surveys
" His children's looks, that brighten at the blaze;
" While his lov'd partner, boastful of her hoard,
" Displays her cleanly platter on the board:"

* * * * * * *

" Such are the charms to barren states assign'd,
" Their wants but few, their wishes all confin'd."

This district is, however, rich in mineral treasure; and several lead-mines, and one or

two copper-mines, are worked with considerable spirit.

Here my observations upon South-Wales draw to a close: they have been very brief upon Radnorshire; and yet the excursion on the banks of the Wye describes almost its only attraction. Indeed, this county is remarkably barren in subjects of picturesque beauty, memorials of antique grandeur, and remarkable towns and villas. I find but one religious house in this shire described in Dugdale's Monasticon, or Tanner's Notitia Monastica, which is Abbey Cwm Hir, situated about six miles east of Rhayder; but I understand that no part of the building remains. It was founded for Cistercian monks by Cadwathelan ap Madoc in the year 1143, and must have been a very inconsiderable foundation, as its revenues at the suppression of monasteries were only valued at 28*l.* 14*s.* 4*d.*

The castles that occur in this county are neither remarkable in their history nor venerable in decay. Yet frequent and memorable are the earthen works that characterize almost every hill in the county, which either

either wear the marks of cairns * or ancient encampments.

" 'Twas on those downs, by Roman hosts annoy'd,
" Fought our bold fathers, rustic, unrefin'd!
" Freedom's fair-sons, in martial cares employ'd,
" They ting'd their bodies but unmask'd their mind."

On a hill near Knighton, at the eastern limit of the county, is still shewn the CAMP OF CARACTACUS; and an encampment on another hill separated from the first by a deep valley, is said to be that of the Roman general Ostorius. The Britons waited the attack of the enemy's legions in their advantageous position, and fought like men who valued life no longer than as it was connected with freedom; but their courage availed nothing before the skill and discipline of the Roman army; after an immense slaughter they gave way, and Caractacus's wife, daughter, and brothers, were taken prisoners. The king escaped, but was soon after betrayed

* Cairns, or barrows, in the druidical ages, were large heaps of stones raised over the bodies of deceased heroes. After the introduction of Christianity, similar piles were placed on malefactors, to give a sort of counteraction to the old custom; and it soon became the bitterest wish a man could give his enemy, "that a cairn might be his monument."

into the hands of his enemies. His noble speech and deportment when brought before the Roman emperor, as transmitted to us by the pen of Tacitus, must ever excite admiration, and evince the immutable dignity of manly virtue, however bereft of the factitious splendour of power.

OFFA'S DYKE also passes near Knighton; the boundary established by Offa king of the Mercians between his dominions and Wales, after a decisive victory over the Britons. It formerly extended from the Dee to the mouth of the Wye; and it was enacted, that any Welchman found in arms on the English side of the boundary should have his right hand cut off. KNIGHTON itself I find described to be an ordinary town, built on a steep bank of the Teme. Seven miles southward of it is PRESTEIGN, a better built and paved town than the former, and graced with a beautiful little eminence (the site of its castle), laid out in public walks. This town is considered as the modern capital of the county: in it are held the assizes; and, having the jail, it is farther distinguished with all the apprehended rogues in Radnorshire. OLD RADNOR, three or four miles farther

southward,

southward, Camden supposes to have been the Magoth of Antoninus, garrisoned by the Paciensian regiment in the reign of Theodosius the younger: but, whatever it may have been formerly, it now appears an insignificant village. NEW RADNOR, though nominally the capital of the shire, is little better; yet a few vestiges of an encompassing wall and a castle give it more unequivocal marks of former importance than the parent town. Its decline is dated from the rebellion of Owen Glendower, who destroyed the castle and ravaged all the surrounding district. In a rocky glen, in the vicinity of this town, is a fine cascade, though of inconsiderable volume, called WATER BREAKS ITS NECK.

Crossing Radnor forest, an extensive tract of sheep down and coppice, about twelve miles from New Radnor, and seven from Bualt, is LLANDRINDOD WELLS. This place, consisting only of one house of public entertainment and a few cottages, appears to be justly distinguished for the efficacy of its springs, which are chalybeate, sulphureous, and cathartic. But though the medicinal virtues of these waters be undoubted, and considered even more potent than those of Harrowgate;

Harrowgate; yet the place, being dreary, remote, and void of elegant accommodation, is only visited by a very few real invalids: none of that gay tribe is here to be met with which forms the principal company at watering-places in general.

Having thus executed my design of a general description of South-Wales and Monmouthshire, I shall return to the narrative of my tour.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

GOODRICH CASTLE AND PRIORY—WILTON CASTLE—SCENERY OF THE WYE FROM ROSS TO MONMOUTH — ROSS — GLOUCESTER.

WE took our farewel leave of Monmouth on a hazy morning, that concealed the surrounding scenery in the earliest part of our ride to Gloucester. But the mist gradually withdrawing allowed us a gleam of the majestic Wye, about two miles from Monmouth; which, soon deserting the course of the road, winds beneath the bare rocky cliffs of the little Doward, and becomes lost among high wooded hills. Near the seven-miles stone from Monmouth we struck off the turnpike into an embowered lane in search of GOODRICH CASTLE, a very picturesque ruin, which rises among tufted trees on a bold

bold eminence above the Wye. The view of the castellated hill, combined with a grand fertile valley, which extends for many miles in a richly-variegated undulation, enlivened with the elegant though simple spire of Ross church, and with peculiar graces, watered by the copious river, was uncommonly striking: while to the right we caught a glimpse of the grand features about Symondsgate and the Caldwell rocks, backed by a range of heathy hills that forms the boundary of the forest of Dean.

The remains of this castle shew it to have been of considerable strength, though not very extensive. Its figure is nearly square, measuring fifty-two yards by forty-eight, with a large round tower at each angle. A deep trench, twenty yards wide, is cut in the rock round the walls, leaving a narrow ridge which crosses the moat to the grand entrance. On entering the gateway, a small apartment to the left, with an ornamented Gothic window, and a stone chalice for holding holy-water, appears to have been the chapel; or, considering its small size, rather an oratory. A curious octagon column rising from a mass of ruins opposite has belonged to a principal

J. T. Barber del.^t W. Pickett sculp

Goodrich Castle.

principal apartment, and most probably the baronial hall. A large square tower was the keep, which is said to have been built by an Irish chieftain named Mackbeth, as a ransom for himself and his son, who were held prisoners in the castle; and until lately two ponderous helmets were shewn as belonging to them, one of which held half a bushel.

There is no doubt but that this was a frontier post held by the Saxons; and many parts of the ruin still bear a Saxon or early Norman character *. During the reign of king John, and in several succeeding ages, it was in the hands of the earls of Pembroke, but afterwards deviated from that line. In Jacob's Peerage, under the article of the earls of Shrewsbury, it is related, that the Hugh le Despencers forcibly seized Elizabeth Comyns at Kennington in Surry, and detained her in confinement above a year; concealing her in their different castles, until she was, by menaces of death, constrained to pass "her manor of Painswick in the county of Gloucester to the said earl, the elder De-

* In *Dugdale's Monasticon*, the signature *Godricus Dux* occurs twice among the witnesses to two charters granted by king Canute.

spencer,

spencer, and the castle of Goodrich to Hugh the younger; to them and their heirs."—Thus it was in feudal ages, when every potent baron dared violate the strongest bands of society; when the property and freedom of humble individuals, and the honour of females, were subjected to the will of contiguous power; and suffering innocence could only plead the wrongs that she suffered at the tribunal of the oppressor. But, alas! it is a principle of our being, it is a fact which ought to be treasured in the minds of Britons, that where power is without controul it seldom fails to act unjustly.

In the civil wars of Charles the First this castle was in the hands of both parties successively; and upon the parliamentary cause proving triumphant, it was ordered to be dismantled: but a sufficient compensation was allowed to the countess of Kent, to whom it belonged. The farm-house appertaining to the meadows and corn-fields about the castle is situated a few hundred yards from the castle, to the right, and occupies the site of GOODRICH PRIORY: the chapel, converted into a barn, and some other Gothic remains, are still visible.

In

In our way from Goodrich to Ross, for the first two miles traced in a bridle road that might with equal propriety be called a ditch, we had frequent views of the proud ruin towering above its incircling groves; which, variously combining with the surrounding landscape at each succeeding station, proved a new and delightful object. We crossed the Wye at Wilton bridge; a short distance above which, on the low western bank of the river, appear the mouldering towers of WILTON CASTLE, a Norman structure, once the baronial residence of the Greys. Several pleasure-boats with awnings, handsomely fitted up for the reception of company that would navigate the Wye, are moored by the bridge *.

I earnestly advise every traveller of taste and leisure, proceeding by the way of Ross to Monmouth, not to neglect the beautiful scenery of this river: he may take one of the boats; or, if he prefer riding or walking,

* The distance from Ross to Chepstow, in a straight line, is not more than sixteen miles and a half; but owing to the sinuosity of the river the voyage by water is near thirty-eight miles. The boats descend with the current, and are towed all the way back by men: this may account for the expensive hire of a boat, which I understand to be three guineas.

he

he may enjoy its principal charms by reversing my journey from Goodrich; whence crossing Hensham ferry, he will proceed among pleasant meadows on the margin of the stream in front of the sublime grandeur of the Caldwell rocks; then ascending the isthmus of an immense peninsulated rock called Symond's gate, at the height of 2000 feet above the surface of the river, he will enjoy a superlative prospect of its mazy extent and the grand scenery around. From the vicinity of Goodrich the Wye urges its course through a narrow valley inclosed by towering woody mountains, or struggles in more limited confines, where protruding rocks plunge their naked perpendicular sides into the body of the stream. Descending from the lofty neck of the peninsula, which is but six hundred yards across in a direct line, although the circuit of the river round the rock is upwards of four miles, he will find himself in a deep valley of astonishing grandeur, formed on one side by the romantic precipices of the peninsula, and on the other by the great Doward, a huge stratified limestone mountain, studded with lime-kilns and cottages. At the New-wier he

will re-cross the river, and soon join the turnpike to Monmouth.

The old town of Ross, situated on a gently-inclining bank of the Wye near Wilton bridge, afforded us no subject of admiration or interest, except in the recollection which it excited of Mr. John Kyrle, whose public spirit and philanthropy inspired the verses of Pope. We baited our horses at an inn which was formerly his house, and now bears the sign of "The Man of Ross." The views from the cemetery of Ross church are among the most beautiful that imagination can picture, looking over a lovely vale, adorned with the majestic meanders of the Wye, enriched with numerous groves and woods, and finished by a distance of Welch mountains: to detail its several charming features would be as tedious, as it would prove a vain attempt to realize a just idea of the landscape.

We now traversed a well-cultivated district, whose numerous though gentle hills were frequently clothed with apple-orchards, and in about six miles ride, upon a wretched road, gained a heathy eminence, when the great plain of Gloucester appeared before us, stretching to an immense distance in every

direction. At the extremity of the plain, at least in appearance, rose the towers and spires of Gloucester, faintly relieving from the Cotteswold hills, whose high continuous summits were strongly contrasted by the broken form of the Malvern hills afar off on the left.

The Severn, near GLOUCESTER, separates into two channels; which, soon re-uniting, inclose a tract of land called the Isle of Alney; so that we approached the city over two bridges connected together by a high causeway near a mile in length, which traverses the islet. An assemblage of ships, houses, and numerous spires, greeted us with a look of more public importance than we had been used to for several weeks, as we drew near the city. It would require a volume to give an adequate description of this place: all that my limits will allow me to say is, that it is one of the fairest cities in England, regularly composed of four principal wide well-built streets, meeting at right angles in the middle of the town; abounding with Gothic churches and other public structures, and a new-built gaol, which is one of the best in the kingdom. But its chief ornament

ment is its truly grand cathedral, remarkable for its elegant tower, surmounted with four transparent pinnacles of the most exquisite workmanship, and for having the largest Gothic window in Britain: nor is it less to be noticed for the curious ramifications and transomes of its fretted roof, and the high state of enrichment throughout the structure *. We ascended to the summit of the tower, where

" The bursting prospect spreads immense around:
" And, snatch'd o'er hill and dale, and wood and lawn,
" And verdant fields, and dark'ning heath between,
" And villages embosom'd soft in trees,
" And spiry towns by surging columns mark'd
" Of household make, your eye excursive roams
" To where the broken landscape, by degrees
" Ascending, roughens into rigid hills;
" O'er which the Cambrian mountains, like far clouds
" That skirt the blue horizon, dusky rise."

A tributary sigh escaped as we caught the last gleam of our much-loved principality;

* We did not neglect to visit the remains of Lanthony Abbey near Gloucester, the successful rival of the foundation in Monmouthshire. The ruins are situated about a mile southward of the town: they are by no means picturesque, consisting of a series of buildings which surround a large square area; the dilapidated walls of the chapel are standing without encumbrance; but the other parts are made up into farming habitations, with numerous out-houses and sheds.

nor can I conclude my subject without transmitting that view of the Welch individual character and state of society (particularly alluding to the southern district), which impressed me during my tour, and which I have since believed to be just.

Wales may be considered as exhibiting almost the sole remnant of "the good old times" existing in Britain. Separated from those causes of extrinsic splendour which domineer over other parts of our island, the opulent landholders freely dispense the wealth of their inheritance with unostentatious liberality. Indifferent to outward shew, their first cares evince a parental regard to the poor on their domains, and the maintenance of their forefathers' good cheer. An interchange of good offices is alike conspicuous between them and the commonalty; and it is no less pleasing to see the friendly solicitude of the one, than the unaffected respect and attachment of the other.

The Welch are justly described to be the most robust and hardy inhabitants of this kingdom; for, unenervated by those sedentary employments foisted on less happy regions

gions by luxury and avaricious policy, they boast the vigorous frames of aboriginal Britons. Although not generally tall, they possess a more unequivocal criterion of strength, in a fine breadth of chest; and hence it has been remarked, that a Cambrian regiment drawn up in line covers more ground than any other. By healthful toil and simplicity of diet invigorated, they are at once potent, courageous, animated, and generous.

It has been asserted, that the Welch are averse from strangers;—but by whom? By those who have provoked that aversion; who, carrying with them a vulgar estimation of superior show at the tables of England, have not known how to approve a regular board of hospitality, when contrasted by the splendid profusion of fashionable entertainments; who, representing the more gay appointments of other resorts, have pitied the Welchman's old-fashioned furniture, and wondered how any gentlemanly being could exist in his gloomy Gothic habitation. Such as can conceive no other travelling enjoyments than superior inns, sumptuous dinners, and bowling-green roads, may quarrel with our principality.

cipality. But it is for those who travel with more enlarged views, and proper introductions, to declare the ingenuous welcome that they have experienced: the eager solicitude that was every where manifested to afford them information; and the liberal fare set before them, which not even the greatly-increased expence of family establishments could effectually suppress.

As every virtue has its concomitant shade, we have to lament that the Welchman's ardent spirit sometimes inclines him to be quarrelsome; yet, as there is generosity at the bottom, his passion seldom becomes vindictive. A disposition for social enjoyment has led him from conviviality to habits of intemperance; and an improvident hospitality, to the ruin of his family's fortune. An error more harmless in its operation arises from his admiration of illustrious ancestry; which often resolves itself into an association of personal importance, that unbiassed individuals are not inclined to allow. These asperities are wearing away, under the attrition of a more extended and enlightened intercourse. But it is the heartfelt wish

wish of an earnest admirer of their present state of society, equal to every essential duty of a manly people, that the chilling apathy of morbid refinement may never paralize their spirit of independence, that spring of energetic action which forms the noblest attribute of Man.

THE END.

NICHOLS and SON, *Printers*,
Red-Lion-Passage, Fleet-Street